

## Road Trip

This is yet another in the Next Door Neighbor series; reading those stories isn't strictly necessary, but would probably be helpful.

When Robyn - Lucy's daughter by a previous marriage - graduated High School, and went on to start college, Lucy and I decided that it was time for us to have a little time off for ourselves. When we told Robyn and Sandra - adopted by us when her parents were killed - what we were thinking of doing, both girls were not only accepting of the idea, but went on to encourage us. As Robyn put it "Dad, you and Mom haven't had a vacation just for yourselves since you got married; it's time the two of you took the time to get away!", to which Sandra added "Don't worry, Uncle Dan - we can take care of ourselves while you're gone."

I suppose that most parents, on hearing something like that with two girls in college and living at home, would worry that their kids would be throwing parties every night and bringing home all of the school's athletic teams for some 'horizontal recreation' - but Lucy and I both knew, all too well, that OUR two weren't like that. For starters, both had already brought home boyfriends for the purpose of staying the night - with our knowledge and permission. You see, our family was a lot closer than most: I had been the one to deflower

Robyn when she was just 13, and Sandra when she was 15; from there both girls went on to make love with Lucy. Since that time, all four of us had shared the tremendous love that we all felt for each other innumerable times. We'd even had others join us, as well - including a number of FBI agents (Amy and friends) that we'd come into contact with, as well as a woman and her daughter that we'd provided 'protective custody' for.

These are all closer than average relationships, the names will help emphasize that closeness and help link the other story to this one.

With the knowledge that the girls would be okay with our absence, Lucy and I proceeded to make the necessary arrangements.

Lucy was a Vice-President at the company where she worked, and it took only a little negotiation before they'd approve her taking an unpaid leave of absence for as long as we wanted to make our vacation: a full year. Me, I didn't have any problems: I worked for myself, and only had to make sure that all the projects I was working on for my customers would be done before we left. Previously, I'd earned myself a nice chunk of money by recovering over 300 million dollars for one of the clients of Lucy's company; my paycheck had been 8% of the money that had been recovered. Even after taxes and everything else, I still had more than enough money to take care of Lucy and Robyn. I

continued working as a free-lance programmer mostly just so I'd have something to do - much as Lucy had stayed at her job.

When everything was settled that we could go, we started making plans for the how and when. We finally settled on renting a large motor home; that we wanted to rent it for an entire year made the company we got it from more than willing to add a few things to it, like a satellite Internet hookup, miniature TV camera that looked out the back window with the monitor on the dash so I could see what was behind me when I had to back the monster up, an automatic leveling system so that all I had to do was hit a switch and the beast would extend stabilizers until it was level, and so on. When they were done, I took it to a friend that was a hardware geek (as opposed to my being a software geek), and he added a few more niceties: providing connections so I could tie a GPS system into the laptop I planned to take along. Finally, I took it to another friend that was kind enough to add a few little hidden cubbyholes to it so that Lucy and I could take along a few things without having to worry about them being found and stolen if someone broke into it while we were somewhere else.

When all of that was done, Lucy and I spent a full week driving the thing around (soon calling it 'the Monster' because it drove, well, like a bus) just to make sure that we knew how, so that we had a better 'feel' for where it was and what it would do. Once we were satisfied we could do a decent job of driving it, we went down to the Motor Vehicles office and took the tests, getting the appropriate endorsements for our driver's licenses.

Lucy and I had decided that what we wanted to do was to do a 'grand tour' of the United States while I took photos of whatever caught my attention; Lucy and others continued to tell me that I definitely had an 'eye' for good photos, and finally talked me into devoting a little time to the subject. With that in mind, Lucy and I planned to time our 'tour' so that we were in the southern part of the country during the winter, and work our way North as summer approached. Along the way, we would detour as necessary to stop in and visit many of the friends that we'd made.

The last few nights before we were to leave, Robyn and Sandra each let us know that we'd be missed...

Lucy and I went up to go to bed a little late one night, only to find Sandra waiting for us: stark naked and spread-eagled on our bed!

Lucy and I looked at each other before Lucy turned to ask Sandra "And you've parked yourself in the middle of our bed.... why?"

Sandra just grinned at us, and answered "Because I wanted to let you know how much I'm going to miss you while you're gone, of course!"

I smiled back at her, as did Lucy, as I responded "Of course. What was I thinking of?"

As Sandra watched us, Lucy and I didn't dawdle getting undressed, and into the bed with her. Lucy took position on one side of her, and I, the other. Lucy and I reached out to place a hand over one of her breasts, each of us feeling her nipple erect into our palms.

With a silent communication, each of us lowered our head to begin kissing her - not on the lips, as she clearly expected us to, but on her shoulders - then moving on to include her neck, then her ears. It was only a couple of minutes before we could hear her begin to pant as our 'stereo' efforts at arousing her took effect.

Even as we continued to kiss and 'lip-nibble' her neck and shoulders, Lucy was slowly touching and caressing her way down Sandra's body. Lucy began to softly stroke the insides of Sandra's spread thighs as she gently kissed the youngster's smooth skin; I started playing with her delightful breasts: Sandra had reached her full growth, and proudly sported a bust that measured 34-C. Each of her pale mounds was capped with an areola that was just a couple of shades darker than her skin. The size of a quarter, they formed little cones that flowed gracefully into pencil-diameter nipples that grew to a full half-inch when erect - as they were, thanks to my most attentive ministrations!

I knew when Lucy's hand finally came into contact with Sandra's mons and vaginal lips because of the deep moan of aroused pleasure she released. Soon after, I detected the musky aroma of an aroused young woman.

A quick glance let me know that Lucy's mouth was approaching the source of the wetness that glistened on her fingers before I moved 'up' to start kissing Sandra's face and lips.

I knew when Lucy got to her target when I felt Sandra's hips arch off the bed as she released a low moan into my mouth.

My hand continued to busy itself with Sandra's breasts as our tongues danced and dueled in each others mouths, accompanied by her steadily increasing moans and soft gasps as Lucy tenderly ministered to our adopted daughter's sex.

Several happy minutes later, Sandra broke her kiss with me to pant "Please! I want Uncle Dan in me!"

Lucy slowly ended her licking of Sandra's clitoris, and raised her head, smiling as she asked "How would you like to do it, dear?"

Sandra told us "I... I want him to make love to me in my butt. And I want to use my mouth on you, too, Aunt Lucy!"

Lucy and I shared a look - it wasn't often that Sandra asked for me to have anal sex with her; having her do so now, and wanting to engage in some mutual frau-licking with Lucy, only told us just how much she'd miss us while we were gone.

It took only a moment for us to figure out the best way of giving Sandra what she wanted. Lucy moved to lie on her back, and Sandra quickly and happily moved to position herself in a '69' over her. While the two of them got started with each other, I went to the bathroom to retrieve a tube of lubricant. When I got back, the room was already filled with the soft, liquid sounds of two women giving each other pleasure - and the heady aromas of TWO highly-aroused females.

I moved behind Sandra, and opened the tube of lubricant before squirting a healthy dollop into my hand. As I began to apply it to Sandra's nether regions, Lucy took the opportunity to take me into her mouth and start sucking me to erection. Even as I was lengthening and hardening in Lucy's mouth, Sandra began pressing herself back against my fingers as I carefully made sure that her rectum was slippery enough for what we were about to do.

When I was fully erect, Lucy let me slip from between her lips and returned to applying her considerable oral skills to Sandra's labia and clitoris. For my part, I quickly applied another blob of lube to my penis before moving to rest the head against the rosette of Sandra's anus.

Sandra lifted her head from between Lucy's thighs long enough to tell me "Yes, Uncle Dan - that's what I want!"

As Sandra's head lowered again, I started pressing myself against her, feeling it as she consciously relaxed herself to help make it easier for me. A little more pressure and it was done: the head of my erect penis slipped through the tight ring of her anus, accompanied by a deep moan. From the tone of it, I knew that it was a moan of pleasure, not complaint. I paused for a bit - not only to give Sandra a chance to adjust to having me in her ass, but to let ME 'settle down', too - before easing myself even farther into her. A few moments later, and my pubic hair was tight against her tailbone, my hardness fully inside her.

Again, I paused for a bit before slowly withdrawing myself from her a bit, then sliding back in. Over the next few minutes, I slowly increased the speed and length of my strokes into her most personal opening. As I did, the sounds of Sandra's arousal and pleasure quickly increased - along with her enthusiasm for what she was doing to/for Lucy, judging from the sounds Lucy was making.

All three of us delighted in the pleasure we were giving and receiving for the next several minutes, the sounds and scents of lovemaking permeating the air. Along the way, Lucy's lips and tongue - combined with my activities - brought Sandra to an orgasm. It was followed a few minutes later by another, even stronger.

Finally finding her own release, Lucy let her head drop back onto the bed as she cried out with the first spasm that overtook her, then gasping and moaning as Sandra continued stimulating her in time with each successive wave of pleasure. Only when Lucy managed to croak "Sandra! Please!" did the youngster lift her head again to let herself focus exclusively on what I was doing to her.

As I continued pistoning in and out of her nether opening, I could feel Sandra's excitement building: periodically, a small spasm would overtake her, causing her anus to tighten around me - and increasing my own arousal in the process.

A couple more minutes went by before Lucy was able to raise her head again, and begin licking at Sandra's vaginal opening, sucking on her labia and clitoris, and every so often detouring to lick my balls as they swung forward. With both of us 'working' on her, Sandra's arousal increased dramatically; it was only a few more minutes before she threw her head back and released a soft cry as she found her release.

As spasms coursed through her body, Sandra's back opening would tighten around me - nearly painfully so. But it wasn't painful: it was incredibly arousing, and even as the power of her orgasm began to taper off, the sensations she was creating around my penis were enough to trigger my own climax. As the first hot jet of my semen washed her bowels, Sandra cried out again, nearly screaming "I feel it! You're coming in me! It feels so hot!"

Adding fuel to the fire of my climax, Lucy reached between my legs and began dragging her fingernails across my scrotum, causing the next spurt of my cum to erupt from me nearly as powerfully as the first.

As our respective climaxes tapered off, I felt Sandra start to weaken underneath me, and I quickly got hold of her so that she wouldn't collapse on top of Lucy. Lucy saw what was happening, and quickly ended her attentions to Sandra's pelvis to eel out from under the two of us. With the way clear, I gently lowered Sandra to the bed, keeping my semi-erect penis still buried between her cute buns.

Once on the bed, I held myself over our adopted daughter, covering her body with mine. The most capable of the three of us, Lucy got out of bed and went into the bathroom; she returned a short time later with an obviously damp washcloth and a towel. When she was back in bed with us, Lucy waited until my penis had shrunk enough to pull free of Sandra's intimate embrace before going about cleaning the remains of the lubricant - and my semen - from Sandra and me. Once she'd made sure that both of us were reasonably clean and dried off, Lucy tossed the washcloth and towel onto a nightstand before lying down on the opposite side of Sandra from me, so that both of us could hold and cuddle her.

A couple of minutes later and Sandra had recovered enough to turn over so that she could turn her head and look at each of us before telling us "I'm going to miss both of you SO much - and I'm going to miss being able to have fun with you like this even more!"

First Lucy, then I, tilted our heads forward to kiss her softly on the lips before Lucy told her "We're going to miss you, too, sweetheart. And having fun with you!"

I followed Lucy's remark with my own "Sandra, what Lucy said is true - we're going to miss you as much as you'll be missing us. But we'll be back before long, and just think about the 'welcome home' party we can have!", the last with a grin.

Sandra managed a smile for me, but I - and Lucy - knew that her heart really wasn't in it; both of us knew how much she loved us, and how much we loved her.

The three of us lie there holding each other until we quietly drifted off to sleep. When we woke up the next morning, Lucy and I discovered that Sandra had left us sometime during the night.

When Robyn showed up a couple nights later, after Lucy and I had gone to bed, she didn't make any bones about why she was there: she crawled onto the foot of the bed between us and clearly announced "I'm here to try and get enough love from both of you to hold me until you get back. Think you can do it?"

Lucy and I both laughed a little before I answered "I don't know - but we can sure try!" - accompanied by Lucy's enthusiastic nodding, something that made Robyn smile.

Lucy and I threw the bedcovers back, and opened our arms to her; when she was close enough, we both hugging and kissing her as she moved to lie on her back between us.

It wasn't but a few moments before we felt Robyn's soft hands begin to explore our bodies, and only a moment after that before we began to reciprocate. As always, I couldn't help but marvel at the smooth softness of her skin, the firmness of her breasts, and farther down, the tautness of her delightfully curved ass. Along the way, my hand met Lucy's as she gently caressed Robyn's mons and pubic thatch.

In return, I could feel Robyn's fingertips re-memorizing the scars I bore as a result of my service in the Army, then her cool hand enveloping my manhood and slowly stroking it, and the gentle touch of her lips on mine.

After a bit, Robyn's lips left mine, and I was free to begin kissing her neck and shoulder as I slowly eased my way down her body, until I could begin kissing her breast and sucking on her rapidly-erecting nipple. As I happily teased her nipple with my lips, Robyn put her hand behind my head holding me in place as she moaned low in her throat.

As pleasant as it was to nurse at Robyn's delightful breasts, I wanted to do more. Slowly, I began kissing my way down her body again, until I finally reached my goal: the dark wedge of pubic hair at the base of her belly - and more to the point, the hot, wet channel that I knew lay between her smooth, firm thighs.

When it became clear what my goal was, Robyn readily spread her legs to make room for me. A few moments more, and I could see the target of my desires: the glistening lips of Robyn's parted vaginal lips.

The first pass of my tongue between her labia earned me a full taste of Robyn's light, sweet nectar as she arched her hips in pleasure at what I was doing. Another pass of my tongue, then another; Robyn's muffled moan caused me to look up and see that Lucy was astraddle her daughter's face, receiving much the same treatment that I was dispensing.

I soon expanded my efforts to include taking Robyn's labia between my lips and gently 'chewing' on them, and sucking them - then moving on to begin softly licking and sucking on her erect clitoris. My attentions served to increase her arousal, and I happily made frequent side-trips to lick up the overflow of Robyn's oils before returning to my various ministrations. Things finally got to the point where I was spending nearly as much time lapping up her nectar as I was doing anything else; at that point, I formed a 'spear' with my tongue and tried to see if I could reach her tonsils from her crotch. The result was a muffled shriek from Robyn, followed by her trying to spread her legs as far as they would go to encourage me to try harder. I did, and soon had my hands full - literally, since they were cupping her ass cheeks - trying to hold her still so that I didn't get a whiplash as I repeatedly penetrated her hot opening.

This all went on for several minutes before I heard Lucy's cries of pleasure as she tripped over into orgasm, thanks to Robyn's talented tongue.

When Lucy finally got her senses back, she nearly collapsed to lie on the bed - opening the way for my participation to become much more active. Lifting my head from between Robyn's thighs (accompanied by a moan of disappointment from Robyn), I quickly moved to a kneeling position. Robyn looked up at me, and with a delighted look on her face, saw that I was erect. With a happy "Let me get you ready!" she lifted up so that she could lean forward and take me into her mouth, eagerly licking and sucking on my manhood. When she was finally satisfied that I was properly lubricated with her saliva, she pulled her lips from around me with a soft 'pop', and lie down again in open invitation for me to make love with her. I positioned myself between her legs, and she reached down to take me in her hand so she could position the head of my penis against her hot opening. I pressed forward, and after only a little initial resistance, slipped through the tight ring of her entrance and on into the tight, wet channel of her womanhood. I backed out a little, then pressed in again; another cycle of that, and I was balls-deep into my adopted daughter's sheath.

Securely embedded in her, I let my body tilt forward so that I could lower my head and begin kissing her as I started slowly sliding my penis out of her; when only the head was

inside, I reversed direction, filling her again, accompanied by her deep groan of pleasure. Over the next couple of minutes, I slowly increased the speed of my movement in her until the steady rhythm of our union filled the room with the liquid noises of our lovemaking.

Between what I'd done to her, and what she'd done to Lucy, it wasn't long before our lovemaking added enough to Robyn's arousal to push her into an orgasm. The clenching of her hot, wet vagina around my manhood felt wonderful - but I managed to keep control of myself so that I could continue making love with her.

As she came down from her release, her eyes suddenly flew open when she realized that I was still making love with her. With a moaned "Oh, Go-o-o-d-d-d!", she put her arms around me and pulled me down so she could start planting kisses and soft bites on my neck and shoulders even as her panting started ratcheting up again. A few minutes later, she cried out as another climax washed over her. Though it was a lot closer that time, I still managed to keep from filling her with my cum; instead, I simply stopped my motion over her, holding myself deep inside her as I enjoyed the feeling of her vagina clenching around me.

When she'd caught her breath again, she opened her eyes to look up at me in joy before she realized that I was still fully erect, and buried deep inside her. Her eyes grew to the size of saucers as she asked "You didn't... You're still hard?!"

I smiled down at her and answered "You said you wanted enough to hold you while we're gone - have you changed your mind, now?"

"Oh, god, no!" she replied before arching her hips to get me moving in her again, her delight plain on her face.

With her affirmation that she was ready for more, I started making love with her again. Soon, I was sliding in and out of her with a steady movement that I knew wouldn't end until I'd found my own release. That came (pardon the pun) a few minutes later when I felt her slip into her third climax since I'd entered her; that time, the feeling of her spasming vagina milking my penis was enough to let me find my own pleasure. Pressing myself as far into her as I could, I fired jet after jet of my hot cum into her.

When both of us had recovered enough from the power of our climaxes, I lowered my head so the two of us could share a number of soft, gentle kisses before my penis shrank enough to pull free of her intimate grasp.

Lucy apparently recognized the expression on Robyn's face when that happened, and told us "If you'll get out of the way, Dan, I'll clean her up...", her intentions clear. I smiled and did as I was told while Robyn looked pleased. A few moments later, and Lucy was eagerly licking my cum out of her daughter's dripping opening - accompanied by Robyn's moans of pleasure.



Even after Lucy had vacuumed my semen from Robyn, she continued licking and sucking on the girl's labia and clitoris. For my part, I busied myself with kissing Robyn - and more importantly, playing with and sucking on her breasts and nipples. Together, Lucy and I managed to bring Robyn to another orgasm - clearly the most powerful yet - within just a few minutes.

When Robyn had recovered from her release, Lucy moved up so that she and I were neatly bracketing her; together, we gently caressed the youngster as we lovingly shared kisses with her for a few minutes more.

After a bit, things slowed down and we were content to simply hold each other until we fell asleep. Robyn was still with us the next morning, and happily shared a shower with me and Lucy.

The night before Lucy and I were to leave, we heard a soft knocking at the door to our bedroom. We told whoever it was to come in; it turned out to be Robyn and Sandra, both. We asked what they wanted, and they told us that they simply wanted to spend the night with us - making love if we (Lucy and I) wanted to, but what they wanted most was to just be with us. Lucy and I didn't even have to look at each other - both girls were more than welcome to keep us company. The next morning's shower was a bit crowded, but none of us minded in the slightest...

When Lucy and I actually left, Sandra and Robyn were both trying as best they could to keep up a happy front; but Lucy and I both knew that they'd be crying as soon as we were out of sight - mostly because I think both of us were expecting to do the same damn thing.

Once we were on the road, it took Lucy and I a few days to get into a routine of sorts; once that happened, things went along pretty darn well. Once a week or so, we'd spend the night in a motel instead of the motor home, using the opportunity to do whatever laundry or shopping that needed to be done. We were towing my car on the back of the motor home, so we didn't have to drive the massive hunk of metal just to go get a loaf of bread or a six-pack of sodas or beer.

Along the way, we'd pause wherever and whenever the mood struck - sometimes, I'd want to spend an extra day (or even two) someplace; other times, it was Lucy that kept us still. Either way, we were both happy, and enjoying the hell out of it.

I took lots of photos with the high-end digital camera Lucy had gotten me for my birthday one year; Lucy had a blast meeting people and seeing the different places and things we came across along the way.

Each night, when we'd found a place to stop and settled in for the evening, we'd send an email to the girls and let them know where we were (they'd put a U.S. map on the wall in their room and were marking it to keep track of our travels). We'd also tell them a little bit about what we'd seen and done that day, and hear from them how they were doing. Both missed us, of course, just as we missed them; but they were always careful to make their emails to us happy and cheerful - mostly to try and keep us from worrying about them (which we did, anyway), we suspected.

One of the first people we stopped in to visit was Amy and her husband Tom, along with Erika Simpson, in Washington, D.C. All of them were delighted to see us again, and we spent a full weekend debauching with them before we continued our American Tour.

We were amazed, delighted, fascinated, and overawed along the way by all the people, places, and things that we saw - New York simply overwhelmed us; Philadelphia drove home just how lucky we were to have been born and raised where we were. New England fascinated us. The Midwest - and particularly the Great Plains - left us awed: that people had the guts to head across that vast expanse with little more than a covered wagon and team of horses/mules was all but inconceivable. Then we hit the mountain states, and could only wonder at the stamina and fortitude of those that had made it across the plains, only to take on the Rocky Mountains - and win.

We were nearly 8 months into our journey when we hit Idaho. We were going through a small town in the northern part of the state (we'd made a detour into Canada, just for the sake of saying we'd been there, eh?) after just getting back on the road one morning when we saw what looked like a young girl trying to hitchhike.

Early on, Lucy and I had agreed that we weren't going to pick up hitchhikers, and I eased the motor home to the edge of the lane to make sure I left the hitchhiker plenty of room as we went by. Even as the ass end of the motor home was just clearing the girl, Lucy grabbed my arm and started telling me to stop - that we needed to pick the girl up. I looked at her in surprise, and Lucy told me "I know your eyes were on the road, Dan - but that girl needs a ride - and maybe more. We have to stop for her!"

Nothing to do, of course, but slow the beast back down, and get it over onto the side of the road so we didn't block traffic any more than we had to. I looked behind us, and it didn't seem that the girl had noticed we'd stopped; Lucy corrected that oversight through the simple expedient of getting out and going to get her.

When the two of them got back, and climbed in, I could see that Lucy had been right. It wasn't real obvious at first look, but the girl was in SOME kind of trouble: dressed in pretty worn clothing, there was a scared look around her eyes, and all she had was carrying a ragged backpack. At first look, I thought she looked to be in her mid- to late-

20's; a second, then third, look dropped that number - I finally settled on late teens. She was maybe five and half feet tall, and couldn't have weighed a hundred pounds, sopping wet and with a brick in each hand. It had obviously been a while since she'd last bathed: not only was she dirty, but there was a faint aroma about her. Not that she actually stank, mind you; only enough to let you know that her last bath had been too long ago. Underneath the grime, it looked like she was probably blonde, her hair done in a ponytail that hung past her shoulders; she had a pretty face, with regular features, and a pair of the most beautiful green eyes I'd ever seen. It was all but impossible to tell what her figure was like underneath the (dirty) loose, baggy clothing she was wearing.

As she stood there, I could see that she was trembling slightly; Lucy told me "Dan, this is Lisa Hammarlund. She's looking for a ride - to Seattle, you said?", the last directed at the girl who nodded and answered "Um, yeah, if you're headed that way." in a beautiful contralto voice.

The road we were on was a state road that eventually linked up with an interstate that would take us to Seattle, so the destination wasn't too surprising. What DID surprise me, though, was the way she trembled slightly. Lucy noticed it, too, and asked "Lisa, what's the matter, dear? Is something wrong?"

That seemed to sink in for her, and she answered "Um, yeah, there is. There are some people after me, and I really need to get out of here. Uh, maybe I shouldn't go with you - you look like nice people, and you stopped to give me a ride and all, but I don't want any of MY trouble to rub off on you. I'll just get out, and try to catch another ride, okay?"

On hearing that, I thought to myself "Oh, shit, here we go again!", even as Lucy was giving me a Look before telling her "That isn't necessary, Lisa. We'll be glad to help you out. Why don't you tell us about it?"

Lisa answered "I guess I can do that; but you'd better get this thing moving. I don't know how far they are behind me, and they could be here any time. You really don't want to be on the wrong side of them, you know?"

Part of what I learned in the Army was the judgment of when the time was right to 'argue' something. This wasn't that time. It was blatantly obvious by then that the girl was scared out of her wits. I told them "We're on the way, then" as I turned around and got ready to get the Monster moving. When the traffic had thinned enough, I hit the gas and got us going again - accompanied by an audible sigh and visible relief from Lisa.

Once we were up to speed, Lucy gently guided Lisa to the passenger seat at the front of the bus, then folded down the jump seat immediately behind it for herself. A minute or two went by in silence before Lucy asked Lisa "Is there anything I can get for you, Lisa? Something to eat or drink, perhaps?"

Lisa turned to look at Lucy, then me, then back to Lucy before answering "Uh, if it isn't any bother, some food and water or maybe a soda would be really good."

I looked over at her, and with her a bit closer, could see that she appeared to be a few pounds UNDER weight. I asked her "When was the last time you ate?"

She looked down at her lap, and softly answered "Yesterday - I think"

Lucy just looked at me, and got up to head back to where the little kitchen was. A minute later, I heard the microwave kick on, and shortly after that, detected the aroma of the meat-and-pastry snacks that we carried along for when we just wanted a quick bite. A couple minutes later, I heard the microwave go off, shortly followed by Lucy reappearing with a couple of the snacks and a cold soda. She handed them to Lisa, who didn't even wait for the food to cool: she just bit off a chunk and sucked air as she gave it a couple of token chews before washing it down with a swallow of soda. She repeated that a couple more times as Lucy and I shared another look: yesterday, hell - if she'd eaten in the last 2 days, Lucy and I would have BOTH been surprised.

After Lisa got through the first of the pastries, she slowed down for the second - pausing in between to thank us, profusely.

When she was done, she released a soft belch, blushed, and took another swallow of the soda.

When she settled back in the passenger seat, Lucy asked her "Would you like to tell us about it, now, dear?"

With that question, Lisa started looking scared again, but started to slowly tell us her story.

"I'm from a little town a bit south of here; even as small as it is, it's still the county capitol. There's some folks there that pretty much run everything - the cops, the town Councilman, the businesses, everything. Me and my boyfriend Charlie, we saw some stuff happen that we weren't supposed to. We kept quiet about it, but somehow, somebody found out. When they found out it was us that saw them, we were really in trouble.

"At first, they just threatened us, and we did what they wanted - that is, kept our mouths shut and didn't say anything. But then they started telling us to do stuff, and the next thing we knew, both of us were in even MORE trouble. It kept going on like that for a while, until a week, week and a half ago. That's when Charlie disappeared. I looked all over for him, but couldn't find him anyplace. I hung around for a couple of days, keeping out of the way; then one of my friends told me that they were looking for ME. That was when I put some stuff in my pack and headed out - I didn't know what happened to Charlie, and I didn't want to just disappear, too. I was SO scared, but I knew that if I didn't get away, something bad was going to happen to me, so I tried to sleep in the daytime and only move at night, but I was outside of town and all, and it was pretty hard."

"What did you see?", I asked.

Lisa got a terrified look on her face and answered "Me and Charlie, we saw a couple of people beat this girl to death, and bury her."

"Who did it?", asked Lucy.

Several seconds went by before Lisa softly told us "Sheriff Purdy and one of his deputies."

Lucy and I looked at each other for a couple of seconds before I could pull my eyes back around to watch the road, my mind going about a thousand miles an hour as I mulled over Lisa's story.

It was Lucy that asked "Do you know who the girl was, Lisa?"

A couple of seconds went by before Lisa told us "That's the thing - me and Charlie, we never saw her before. She didn't live in town, or go to the same school we did, that's for sure!"

I spared a glance over to Lisa before looking back at the road again as I asked her "How old are you, Lisa?"

"I'm nineteen. Me and Charlie, we graduated from high school in June last year. Charlie, he was getting ready to join the Marines next month, so he could get the money to go to college. He's pretty good working with computers and such."

It was Lucy that asked the really obvious question: "Are you sure it was the sheriff, Lisa? And his deputy? It couldn't have been someone else, or somebody that just LOOKED like them?"

Somewhere, Lisa pulled up the nerve to give Lucy a withering look before answering "I'm sure it was him - them. Ain't nobody looks anything LIKE Sheriff Purdy 'cept him. And only one that looks like Dep'ty Schoffield is Dep'ty Schoffield. No, it was them, all right. Anyway, if it wasn't them, how come they come after Charlie and me so hard?"

Good point. Lucy and I shared another look.

About that time, I saw flashing lights in my driver's side mirror; it was still too far away to tell who it was. Somehow, I didn't think it was the Hall Patrol from my grade school coming to get me for that time I made an unauthorized visit to the Boys Room.

I waited a bit to see if I could be lucky enough that whoever it was, they were after someone else, or headed somewhere else. No such luck. Nothing to do but let Lucy and Lisa know, so they could have a little time to get ready.

"I don't want to worry anybody, but there's some kind of cop car coming up on us from behind.", I told them.

Lisa immediately started to panic; Lucy was made of sterner stuff, and moved to the back of the Monster, picking up a pair of binoculars along the way so she could get a good look at whatever it was. A moment later, she called out to us "Lisa, are you from Oak Tree County?"

Lisa managed to croak out, loud enough for Lucy to hear, "Yes!"

"Does Sheriff Purdy look a lot like a bulldog? And Deputy Schoffield kind of like Lurch from the Addams family?"

"That's them!" Lisa nearly screamed.

"Screwed again!", I thought to myself before calling out "Lucy, get on the phone and call Ira. Tell him what's happening, what Lisa told us, and where we are. If he doesn't hear from us within the next six hours, to get in touch with Amy." Ira was my lawyer; he was the guy that other lawyers went to when they had problems. On top of being damn good in dealing with the law, his judgment on when to be circumspect and when to be as subtle as a bulldozer was about as good as it could be. If there was any real trouble, somebody besides us was going to be real sorry.

Lucy quickly answered "On it!" before moving to where we stowed the cell phone while we were on the road.

She'd just called out "Done!" when Sheriff Purdy hit the siren to let us know that it was US he was after.

Lucy quickly moved back to sit on the jump seat behind Lisa, and started talking to her, trying to get her calmed down. I took as much time as I dared slowing down and getting off to the shoulder, trying to give her as much time to settle Lisa as possible. Finally, though, there was nothing for me to do but stop - particularly when Deputy Schoffield started gesturing for me to do that very thing.

By the time the Sheriff and Deputy got out of their car and headed back to the Monster, Lucy had managed to settle Lisa down somewhat. She was still obviously terrified, though.

As the Sheriff and Deputy got close to us, the Sheriff indicated that I should meet him at the door. I got up and did as told, politely opening it up for them before they had to knock. Smiling down at them, I asked "What can I do for you gentlemen, today?"

Neither one looked particularly pleased, but Sheriff Purdy managed to keep his cool as he told me "Well, sir, me and the deputy, here, we're after a known criminal that escaped custody."

"And who would that be, Sheriff?"

"Why, that young girl sitting in the passenger seat up front there. Her name's Lisa Hammarlund, no matter what she might have told you it is."

"Well, Sheriff, as a matter of fact, that IS the name she gave us. Doesn't look too dangerous, though - half-starved and scared out of her wits is more like it. What did she do?"

It was the good deputy that responded to that by telling me "What she done ain't no business of yours, mister. You just fetch her on out here, and we'll take care of her real good!"

"I don't know that I can do that just yet, Deputy. You say she escaped custody, but she doesn't look like she could escape a wet paper bag. How did she get away? And you still haven't told me what she's wanted for."

"That's nothin' for you to concern yourself about, mister. You just hand her over, and you'll be on your way."

"I'm sorry Deputy, but I can't do that. Until I get some answers, I'm not willing to let her go anywhere with you."

The sheriff spoke up then, telling me "Mister, if you're all that damn anxious to know what's goin' on with her, then I reckon we can do that. I'm takin' all of you into custody. Luther, you get on up there and follow me back to town. If anybody gives you any trouble, just cuff 'em to something where they'll be out of your way. If I see you stop or pull over, I'll come back to give you a hand. Okay?"

"You got it, Sheriff!" Luther answered before stepping up into the Monster.

Once inside, he had the three of us move back and sit around the little table in the kitchen area; he planted himself in the driver's seat and got himself situated. A few moments later, the Sheriff's car started off, with us following right behind.

Once we were on the road going the other direction, Lucy started to ask me something, but the Deputy interrupted her by shouting "Y'all hush up, back there. I don't want anybody cookin' up no stories or makin' any trouble, y'hear?"

The rest of the drive to the teeming metropolis of Claude, Idaho (population 3,802 according to the city limit sign) was quiet - other than Luther muttering to himself.

We pulled up next to a nondescript brick building that proudly proclaimed itself to be the County Services Building. Sheriff Purdy met us at the door to the Monster, and gestured for us all to follow him through a heavy steel door set into the side of the building. Inside,

we saw a couple of old-fashioned jail cells - the kind with the heavy iron bars from floor to ceiling - with a desk and counter set off to the side. Opposite was a shower stall, fingerprint setup, computer on a desk, and a couple of straight chairs.

The first thing Purdy told us was "Well, now that we got you, Lisa, I reckon we're gonna have to lock you up for a while. But before I can do that, I'm gonna have to make sure you're not trying to smuggle in any kind of contraband like drugs or guns or suchlike."

Having said that, he took Lisa by the arm and led her over to a section of the wall that didn't have anything on, or in front of, it. Looking closely, I could see that it was the 'designated' frisking area because of the dark smudges on the wall, a bit over head-high.

Lisa started to protest, but the Sheriff just told her "No, don't be fussin' now - you're already IN enough trouble. Just grab yourself a piece of wall, there, and spread your feet."

With a pleading look at me and Lucy, Lisa did as she was told - and a few moments later, Sheriff Purdy took it upon himself to frisk her - if you consider pressing his crotch against her buttocks while he fondled her breasts and crotch 'frisking'. He'd been at it for a minute or so when he announced "Damn, girl - you stink! I reckon we're gonna have to clean you up some before I can give you a proper friskin'!"

That said, he got her standing up again, and pushed her over toward where the shower stall was. It took her a few moments to realize that he meant for her to shower right then, and right there; when she did, she turned around and started to say something to him. He just backhanded her across the face and said "Go on, girl! Get them duds off, and get into that shower! I ain't gonna have you stinking up my jail, now!"

Hesitantly, Lisa started to do as she'd been told. First to go was her blouse - and as she took it off, I could see that my earlier estimation of her needing to add a little weight was correct: her ribs were clearly visible. It was only a few moments before the blouse was on the floor, revealing that she had on a soft half-cup bra that left her half-dollar-sized dark pink areolas and crayon-diameter nipples exposed. Next went the jeans she was wearing, showing that she not only had the French-cut panties to match the bra, but that she had a pair of strong, trim legs. Openly crying, she reached between her breasts and unfastened the bra, then let it drop to the floor so that her half-grapefruit sized breasts swayed slightly. Reaching down, she slipped her thumbs under the waistband of her panties before giving a beseeching look to the Sheriff - who just leered at her and gestured for her to get on with it. She did, and when she stood up after setting her panties with the rest of her clothes, all of us could see that she sported a wedge of dark pubic hair that appeared to have been trimmed. She tried to cover herself as best she could, but there simply wasn't any way to conceal her assets. Sheriff Purdy just grinned at her as he reached over to where he could grab a bar of soap, then held it out to her - but far enough away that she'd have to reach for it, effectively exposing her even more even as he forced her into the role of a beggar.



Once she had the soap in her hand, Purdy told her "Okay, get in there. And make sure you clean up GOOD! I'm going to be standing here to make sure you do - and don't take too long about it, either!"

As she went about cleaning herself up, Purdy stood back from the shower - it didn't have a shower curtain - and made no pretense of not watching her. When she was done, she stepped out of the shower, and Purdy repeated the soap trick with the towel he handed her. Once she was dry, he let her dress again, then took her back over to be 'frisked' again.

After a few minutes of such treatment, he stepped back and told her she could stand up. When she did, he took her by the arm again and guided her over to one of the cells. He pushed her in roughly, and she fell onto the cot chained to the wall. As she moved to turn around and sit on it, he stepped back and slammed the cell door shut.

Turning to me and Lucy, he said "Mister, you done stepped in it when you picked that girl up. Then you made an even bigger mistake: you didn't do like me and the deputy told you. Now you're going to learn that I'm the law in these parts! Luther, frisk him and put him in the other cell. I'm gonna be the one to frisk that fine-looking woman with him!"

"Aw, Sheriff, you get all the fun!", Luther complained as he started toward me.

He told me to put my hands on top of my head, and held them there with one hand as he started checking me for weapons - it didn't take him long to discover the .45 I carried. As soon as he touched it through my shirt, he called out "Sheriff! He's got a gun on him!" as he put his hand on the revolver on his hip.

"Well, now, why you packin' a gun, there, hotshot?" the sheriff asked me.

"Seems like a good idea, Sheriff - There's no telling what kind of folks you might run into on the road, these days." I answered, before adding "If I can get my wallet out, I can show you that I've got a Federal permit to carry it."

"Luther, you reach in there and pull his wallet out real careful-like and hand it to him. Mister, you make any sudden moves, and you're gonna start leakin' blood, you understand me?"

"Loud and clear, Sheriff", I answered. With that, the deputy did as he was told, using the hand that had been keeping mine on top of my head to do it. I slowly moved my left hand down, and opened up my wallet, then dug out the card that Clara Hawkes had given me during my first pass at helping the FBI. I handed it to Sheriff Purdy. He took it and looked it over carefully before asking me "Now, why would you be packing around a Federal carry permit, there, Mister Andrews? Specially one issued by the FBI?"

"I did a little work for them some years ago, and that was part of the deal", I answered. I went on to tell him "My wife has one, too - and she's carrying a nine millimeter in her purse, just so you know."

The sheriff and deputy were giving me and Lucy BOTH some serious attention by that time. After a minute or so, Purdy said "I think maybe I'd better just lock you two up until I find out what's going on here. Luther, get his gun, then lock both of them in the other cell. I'm going to get him onto the wires and see what he's all about - I ain't too sure he isn't funnin' us with this Federal permit."

"You've got it, Sheriff" Luther answered, lifting up the back of my shirt and slipping my holstered pistol off my belt. Sheriff Purdy kept an eye on us as the deputy went over to stow my pistol in a locker before coming back to guide us to the other cell. Once the door slammed behind us, the sheriff went over to the computer and began typing on it - doubtless entering my name and other data into the national crime database.

When he was done, he looked up at us and said "You folks just rest easy in there. Sometimes this takes a little while. If it gets on toward lunch, we'll bring you something to eat from the cafe across the street. You ain't been too much trouble so far, and as long as you behave yourselves, you may get out of here by this afternoon. If you don't, then you don't - get my drift?"

Lucy and I both nodded at him. When I turned to look at her, I could see that she was cycling between being utterly outraged at what was happening, and scared by it, too.

I asked the sheriff "Am I going to get a phone call somewhere along the line?"

"You don't need no phone call - you ain't even been arrested yet!" Luther told me, laughing. Sheriff Purdy just smiled at us.

Lucy and I sat down on the cot in our cell; I took her hand, and when she looked at me told her "Don't forget that phone call you made!" - something she'd forgotten about. If we didn't get in contact with the Ira before that six hours timed out, something close to the whole world was going to fall in on Sheriff Purdy and Deputy Sheffield. Lucy knew it, and gave me a nervous smile in return.

A few minutes later, Deputy Sheffield went outside, returning some twenty minutes later with Lucy's pistol, which he put with mine.

When it got close to noon, the Sheriff told Luther "C'mon, Luther - let's get us some lunch."

The two of them got up from where they'd been sitting, and made their way through a different door than we'd come in through - apparently, one that led toward the front of the building and the cafe across the street.

When we were sure they were gone, I quickly moved over next to where Lisa was lying on her cot, quietly crying into the pillow.

"Lisa! Lisa! Get up, and talk to me!" I told her.

She continued to cry for a minute, but eventually managed to sit up. She looked over at me, and asked "What do you want? To blame me for getting us here?"

"Not even a little bit", I assured her, before going on to say "No, I came over to tell you that I'm GLAD we picked you up! Nobody should have to put up with the kind of crap he's pulling. How the hell does he stay in office, anyway?"

Lisa gave me a wan smile and answered "His daddy owns damn near everything in the county: the lumber mill, the best land, most of the stores, and a lot of the property here in town - not to mention the bank. If he don't get voted back into office every three years, folks know they'll be sorry. I'm sorry I got you into this, Mister Andrews - and you, too, Lucy."

Lucy just smiled at her and said "I'm with Dan - I'm glad we gave you a ride, too. And don't worry about us - we can take care of ourselves. What I'm worried about is YOU! What's going to happen to you now?"

"I don't know. I suppose I'll just disappear, like Charlie did." she replied, despondent.

Lucy looked at me, and I could see that she wanted the two of us to talk. I turned back to Lisa and said "try not to worry about it too much, okay? Lucy's right - we can take care of ourselves just fine; and we're going to see if there's anything we can do for you, too."

"You think you can do anything?" Lisa asked, with only a faint trace of hope in her voice.

"I don't know - but we're sure as hell going to try!" I assured her. That seemed to comfort her a bit, and I went back to sit next to Lucy. We got our heads together and started trying to figure out what we could do.

By the time the Sheriff and Deputy got back from lunch - bringing something for me and Lucy, but not Lisa - I had a pretty good idea of what to do.

The sheriff came over to hand me and Lucy our lunches as the deputy went over to see what had been printed out while they were gone. He'd been reading for only a few seconds before he exclaimed "Sheriff! You better have a look at this!"

"What is it that got you so riled up, Luther?"

"This Andrews fella! Seems he's got some kind of Army record - bunch of medals and such, and some other stuff about if he's arrested or anything, folks are supposed to notify

the Army. And there's some notice here about the FBI being interested in him, too; that if he's accused of any kind of crime, it's to be reported to them!"

The sheriff hurried over to have a look at the paper in Luther's hand; he read it over quickly, then again more slowly. When he was done, he looked over at me speculatively and said "Looks like you've got some kind of reputation there, Mister Andrews - and some angels watching over you, too. If I'm reading this right, just asking about you has let the FBI know we're interested in you, and maybe even already have you. Looks to me like you're gonna get out of here a little quicker and a little happier than I'd planned." Turning to Luther, he said "Luther, you let Mister Andrews out, and make sure him and his missus are okay. Then you get them outside, and into that fancy motor home they got. Take them to the gas station - you know which one - and fill 'em up so they ain't out anything gas-wise. If they need or want anything while they're on their way out of town, you try and help 'em. If you ain't sure, you call me on the radio, and I'll tell you what to do. You got it?"

"You bet, Sheriff!" Luther answered as he hurried over to where Lucy and I had stood up. Pulling a key off the wall, he quickly unlocked our cell, and opened the door so we could leave before going back over to stand next to the sheriff.

"Now, Mister Andrews, I hope you can understand that this was all a little mistake - I didn't know who you are, and when you kinda got between me and Lisa, here, well, I just did what I figured I had to do. There ain't no hard feelings on my part, you understand?"

"Sure, Sheriff, I understand just fine. And knowing how concerned you are about the law and all that, I'm sure you'll understand when I tell you that I'm taking a personal interest in what happens to Miss Hammarlund, here. In fact, I'm so concerned that I'm going to ask you again what the charges are against her - and then I'm going to see about getting her a good lawyer. Maybe one from out of town, so that she doesn't have to worry about him being... influenced by any local conditions. And since I don't have to be anyplace in particular, maybe I'll just stay in the area, to see how things go for her. She sure seems like a nice enough young lady, and I'd hate to see her get railroaded by the legal system. You can understand that, can't you?"

Next to me, I could hear Lucy's almost-silent laughter - she understood, as well as I did, that the LAST thing the sheriff wanted was for anything even approximating real law enforcement to happen in his happy little town. That point was made more than obvious by the crestfallen, then nervous, and finally frightened looks on the faces of both men.

"Now, Mister Andrews, you don't have to go through all that trouble just for Lisa, here. Shucks, she's been in all KINDS of trouble with us before, and we already know how to handle her. Why don't you just take it easy on yourself and go on about your business?" the sheriff told me.

"Oh, it's no trouble for me - I like helping folks out when I can. So, what were you saying the charges against her are?"

The sheriff and deputy looked at each other for a few moments before the sheriff told me "Well, you know, now that you mention it, I don't reckon that what she done is worth fussin' over. I reckon we'll just let her go with a warning, and call it good enough. How would that suit you?"

"Why, that's right nice of you, Sheriff", I answered, agreeably.

"Luther, you let Lisa out of that cell - right now, you hear?" the sheriff told Luther - who didn't hesitate to do just that. In just a minute or so, Lisa was standing next with us, Lucy's arm holding her protectively.

"I'm glad you're such a kind man, Sheriff", I told him before asking "Now, could my wife and I get our weapons back, you think?"

It was the sheriff himself that went over to the locker where Luther had put our pistols, unlocked it, and got them out so he could bring them over to us. I quickly got mine repositioned on my belt, under my shirt in the back. Lucy simply held hers by her side, her grip on it making it clear that she knew how to handle it.

"If there ain't anything else, Mister Andrews?" the sheriff asked.

"No, I don't think there is" I replied. The three of us turned toward the door where we'd been brought in, and Lisa whispered to us "If you don't take me with you, as soon as you're out of town I'll be right back here!"

Lucy gave her a small hug and answered "Don't worry, dear. We're going to be staying - ALL of us!" - something that had Lisa looking at her as though Lucy had just levitated off the floor.

The sheriff and deputy followed us outside, and after we'd gotten into the Monster, I turned to them and said "You know, Sheriff, I didn't realize what nice country this is until we got off the highway. I may just stay around a few days to see the sights."

Purdy and Luther both looked a bit crestfallen at that, but covered it quickly. The sheriff responded by telling me "Why thank you, Mister Andrews" - as though he had personally come up with the landscaping design - followed by "We'd sure be glad to have you as our guests. You pick out what motel you want to stay at, and we'll take care of the charges just to show you how sorry we are about this misunderstanding. Would that suit you?"

"That real generous of you, Sheriff, but this rig is pretty well fixed up. I expect we'll just find someplace we can park it where it won't be in anybody's way, and stay here." I answered.

The sheriff didn't look any too happy about that - which caused alarms to start going off in my head - but didn't say anything.

"Well, I guess we'll be on our way, then" I told him, before closing the door and moving up to the driver's seat.

Along the way, I saw that in the process of retrieving Lucy's pistol from her purse, Luther had taken the opportunity to give the Monster a good going over. He hadn't made a mess of things, but it was patently clear that he'd gone through pretty much everything in it.

Lisa took station in the passenger seat, with Lucy in the jump seat. I got the engine started, and we headed away from where the sheriff and deputy were standing, still watching us.

As soon as we got out of sight of them, I asked Lisa "Where do you want to go, Lisa? Home? Family? A friend's house?"

"I think I'd better go back to my Mom's place" she answered, "I don't think I'd be any too welcome at any of my friend's houses, and I just wouldn't be happy in mine and Charlie's place."

"Your mom's house it is. How do we get there?" I asked.

Over the next few minutes, Lisa carefully navigated us. Along the way, Lucy called Ira and let him know that things seemed to be back under control.

We finally pulled up in front of an old - but well-cared-for - two-story clapboard house. As we were getting out of the Monster, a woman came out the front door; when she saw Lisa step out, she got a delighted look on her face and came rushing toward us. When she got to us, the first thing she did was throw her arms around the girl, crying and sobbing. After a couple of minutes, she finally let go, and stepped back to look at Lucy and me before asking Lisa "Honey, who are these folks? Why are you with them, and how come it's them bringing you home?"

Lisa told her "Momma, this here is Mister Andrews, and his wife Lucy. They were the ones that picked me up on the highway when I left and tried to get to Seattle. They wouldn't let the Sheriff have me, and got took in with me when he caught with me - I mean, us. Mister Andrews is some kind of big shot, and when Purdy found out who he was, turned him loose real quick. But Mister Andrews wasn't going to leave unless I got let go, too. Then he brought me back here; he's figuring on staying around for a few days - I don't know why."

I stuck my hand out, seeing where Lisa had gotten her eyes, and said "I'm glad to meet you, Mrs. Hammarlund. My name is Dan Andrews, but please just call me Dan. This is my wife, Lucy". With the time and opportunity to give her a proper once-over, I could see where Lisa had gotten her looks.

"I'm Sarah. I honestly didn't think I'd ever see Lisa again - if Purdy got her, she'd of just disappeared like some others have; if she made it to Seattle, I hoped and prayed she'd have enough sense to just stay there and not come back here, ever. I'm glad to be able to see her again, and if you and your wife are willing, you're more than welcome to join us for supper tonight. Say, six o'clock?"

"We'd be delighted to have supper with you, Sarah", Lucy answered.

With that, Sarah happily put her arm around Lisa and the two of them started toward the house. Lucy and I stood and watched them go, turning to get back into the Monster only when they reached the front door.

A few minutes before supper, Lucy and I found ourselves standing on the porch. I barely had time to get my finger off the button for the doorbell before the door opened and we were being greeted by a much different looking Lisa. Not only had she changed into a dress that definitely flattered her figure, but she'd apparently cleaned up again, and taken the time to brush her hair out; it fairly gleamed as it framed her pretty face and those beautiful eyes.

Seeing us, she immediately got a happy expression on her face and quickly invited us inside. Once the door closed behind us, she guided us into the living room that was obviously the room where 'company' was entertained: it didn't have the 'lived in' look of an area that the family used routinely.

When we were seated, Lisa told us "Momma will be right here; there's just a couple things she's still got to do."

Lucy and I both smiled at her before I told her "That's fine, Lisa. Thank you."

She hesitated a moment before telling us "Things were so busy and confusing before, I don't recall if I remembered to thank you for what you did, or not - so I'd like to make sure by saying it now: thank you. You tried to help me when you gave me a ride, and you did help me when he came to get me, and even more by getting me out of there. There ain't enough words to tell you how much it means to me or how grateful I am; but I want you to know that I'll never forget it. If there's anything I can do to try and repay you or make it up to you, I'll be more than happy to do it." - then looking directly at both of us, she added "Anything."

Having said her piece, she excused herself to go and check on her mother; after she'd left, Lucy looked at me and with a smile on her face asked "Did we just get offered a bed partner, if we wanted one?"

I grinned back and answered "Yeah, I think we did."

Both of us released a small laugh before turning to where we could hear Lisa and Sarah coming. A few moments later, and they came into the room. Sarah had 'dressed up' for the occasion, as well. Gone were the man's shirt and jeans she'd been wearing earlier. In their place, she'd put on her own dress that did as much to flatter her nice figure as Lisa's did. It also revealed that she had a smooth pair of trim, tanned legs, a nice curve to her hips, and revealed enough cleavage to make it abundantly clear that she was female without making her look 'top-heavy'. She wasn't 'beautiful' in the classic sense of the word, but she was what I would call 'handsome' - a simple attractiveness that she would keep well into old age.

Visibly nervous, she gestured for me and Lucy to sit down, and told us "Is there anything you folks would like to drink? A pop? A mixed drink? A beer? Supper is roast beef and all the fixing's, if that matters any."

I thought it over for a second and to try and put her at ease and let her know that Lucy and I were 'just people', answered "A beer would be just fine, Misses Hammarlund". Next to me, Lucy nodded to indicate she'd have the same.

"After what you did for Lisa, please just call me Sarah," she told us.

"And we're Lucy and Dan - both of you, please", Lucy replied.

Both nodded, and Lisa left us to get us the drinks while Sarah found her own seat.

"And what was it that brought you and Lucy to Idaho, anyway, Dan?"

"It's been some time since Lucy and I have had time to ourselves - we've got a couple of daughters in college, now - so we decided we'd both take some time off and take a little 'road trip' to see the country." I answered.

"When is your vacation up?"

"Oh, we've still got a few months left", Lucy answered, "We both took a year off from our jobs so we could travel and see as much as possible."

An obviously surprised Sarah asked "And what kinds of jobs do you have where you can take a year off and still have them when you get back?"

"Lucy is a vice-president with a financial company, and I'm an independent computer programmer", I answered.

"Yes, sometimes he's very independent!" Lucy joked - making Sarah laugh. About then, Lisa returned, carrying a small tray with four bottles of beer and glasses on it. She carefully set them down before taking a seat near her mother. All of us reached out to



select one of the bottles - "Moose Drool" was the brand, of all things. From the corner of my eye, I could see that Sarah and Lisa were waiting to see if Lucy and I were going to use the glasses; again, to try and put them at ease, I went the 'just folks' route, and sat back with the bottle in my hand. A moment later, Lucy picked up a glass and carefully poured her beer into it. Lisa and Sarah both opted to skip the glasses.

"How is it that you wound up here in Idaho, though?" Sarah asked us.

"Well, we've been traveling around seeing different places. We were over in Montana after going through Wyoming to see the Devil's Tower and Yellowstone, and figured we were so close, we might as well hit Canada while we were at it. We were on our way to Seattle so we could start heading down the coast when we saw Lisa." Lucy answered.

Sarah gave a small shudder before telling us "If you folks hadn't done just exactly what you did, Lisa wouldn't be here tonight - with me, or anywhere, for that matter."

Hearing that, Lisa only gave me and Lucy a Significant Look, emphasizing her previous offer.

In another part of the house, we heard something make a small 'ding', and Sarah sat up, telling us "That's the timer for the dinner rolls. If you'll follow me, I think I can fix you up with some decent food - I expect you might be some tired of fast food and restaurants."

"That we are!" Lucy told her, laughing as we all stood up.

As we got close, I could start to smell the food - and from the way my mouth started watering, figured that Sarah's cooking was going to be a more than pleasant diversion from the fare we'd sampled along the way.

During supper, we kept the talk light; by unspoken agreement, we stayed away from how it came about that Lucy and I were there with them.

After supper, and after Lucy and I had helped Lisa and Sarah clear the table over Sarah's protests, we were sitting in the living room again when Sarah decided to 'get down to business' again.

"Dan, Lucy - You seem like real decent folks, and it isn't like I'm not grateful for what you did for Lisa, and me. I am, more than I can say. But just who are you that you can not only get picked up by Sheriff Purdy, and get out scott-free, but bring Lisa out with you? And why are you figuring to stay here when you could be on your way to Seattle so you can enjoy the rest of your vacation? And most of all, what is it that makes you think there's anything you can do about what's going on here? There's been plenty of folks before you that have tried to get us clear of him, and ain't one of them done it yet."

Lucy and I looked at each other for several moments; I don't think either one of us was really surprised by Sarah's questions. Lucy and Sarah had seemed to connect with each other a bit, I told Lucy "You can tell her, if you want."

Lucy nodded, and turned back to face Sarah before saying "When we first got here, I heard Lisa tell you that we're some kind of big shots. Actually, we're not - I mean, we're not politicians or movie people, or anything like that. Dan, here, was in the Army; he got a lot of training and ended up in an outfit that eventually turned into the Delta Force - he did things like go into some pretty scary places and rescue people and do other things. Along the way, he earned a Silver Star and two Bronze Stars - those are medals given to soldiers when they're particularly brave. I've heard about some of it - but none of the real details. A lot of what he did was classified, and he can't talk about it. Take my word on this: he is very, very good at protecting himself and the people around him. From what I've heard" - and here I got something of a Look - "there are two FBI agents that owe their lives to him, and how good he is.

"After he got out of the Army, he went to college and ended up with THREE college degrees: he has a Masters degree in computer science, and Bachelors degrees in Mathematics and Philosophy. From what I just told you, you can tell that he's not only strong and brave, but he's smart, too. If you get to know him, I don't think it will take you long to figure out that he's a LOT smarter than almost anyone you're ever likely to meet.

"After I met him, and got an idea of what kind of man he is - I didn't really know until later - I asked him to help me with a problem I was having with my work. Do you remember several years ago there was a story about a company that had been taken over by the Mafia? And that the company was being embezzled so the executives could run drugs and guns?"

Sarah thought for a moment, then nodded. Lucy went on "That was us - well, Dan, actually. I was the one that figured out that something was going on there; but it was Dan that actually figured out what it was. You know that story a few years ago where the FBI arrested all those drug dealers all over the country? They didn't give his name because we've got two daughters - one of them adopted because the dealers killed her parents - but the man that made that case for them was Dan. The dealers tried to kill him twice while he was doing it; that was when he saved those two FBI agents."

"As for why we're planning to stay, the reason is actually pretty simple: we've seen what Sheriff Purdy and the deputy are like for ourselves. Lisa told us why she was trying to get away. Neither Dan, nor me, thinks those two should be able to do the things they are. Dan and I both know several different people that are in law enforcement - a few policemen, and several FBI agents. We know that all of them would want to do something about what's going on here, if they knew about it, and could. They aren't here, but Dan and I are. You see, Dan told me during some 'pillow talk' one night why he went into the Army, and why he's been willing to help the FBI as much as he has: because he - and me, too, now - believes that there are too many people being hurt, killed, and abused by THINGS that look like people, but don't have anything you could call a 'soul' - they look

human enough on the outside, but on the inside, there's nothing to make them alive. All they know is what they want, and they'll do anything to anybody they have to to get it."

"Dan and I have already talked about it, and we know that we - by ourselves - can't do anything to change what's happening here. But what we - well, mostly Dan - CAN do is enough to get other people involved. Enough of them that we think things not only can, but will change."

Sarah and Lisa sat there looking at us - well, mostly me - for a minute or so before Sarah said "That all sounds pretty impressive. But why should I believe any of it?"

Lucy didn't bat an eye; she just answered "You SHOULD believe it because it's true. Whether you DO believe it is up to you. I can't force you to believe in, or trust, us - and I wouldn't, even if I could."

I cleared my throat, and Lisa and Sarah both looked over at me as I told them "I can appreciate that all of what Lucy just said might sound too good to be true. So what I'm going to do is ask you to make a phone call tomorrow."

"And who would I be calling, Dan?"

"You'll be calling any one of four of the people at FBI headquarters in Washington that can verify some of what Lucy told you tonight. Their names are" - I waited while Sarah grabbed a piece of paper and a pencil - "either Amy or Tom Gallery, Clara Hawkes, and Erika Simpson. I could give you their telephone numbers, but for all you know, I could just be giving you the phone numbers of someone else that's just pretending to be one of these people. If you get the Washington number for the FBI and THEN talk to them, you'll know that they are who we say they are."

I saw Sarah nod at that, and went on to tell her "We haven't seen a Mister Hammarlund, and you haven't said anything about where he might be; so I'm going to guess that he's not around any more for some reason. If that's the case, then I'd expect that you might not have a lot of money to be making long-distance phone calls to Washington, D.C. during peak hours. So I'm going to offer you twenty dollars to cover the cost of the call; there's no reason it should cost you money to make sure somebody's being honest with you."

Sarah gave me an appraising look, and answered "No, there's no Mister Hammarlund. Bill was his name, and he wasn't real popular with the Sheriff because he wasn't afraid to talk about things the Sheriff didn't want mentioned; some years ago, there was an 'accident' out at the lumber mill where he worked, and he got killed. As for paying for the phone call, that won't be necessary. I ain't rich, not by a long shot - but Bill, he was careful to think ahead about his family's future. He had an extra insurance policy, and he put some of our money into savings and the stock market and such. He was a pretty sharp man, and did pretty good, so I've got enough money to keep me comfortable. I own this house, free and clear; otherwise, I'd be as easy pickin's for Sheriff Purdy and all them as anyone else is. As for the rest, if you're willing to have me call folks at the FBI, then I'm

thinking that you're telling me the truth; but something I learned from my husband was that there's no such thing as being TOO careful. I'll be making that call tomorrow, Dan and Lucy, and talking to you again after I hear what they have to say."

Lucy took that as an opportunity to call an end to the evening for all of us by saying "We'll be looking forward to that, Sarah. Until then, it's been a long day, and I think Dan and I would like to get some rest. Would it be okay if we just stayed out front in the street, tonight?"

"If you do, there's a chance somebody might take objection, and bother you about it. You're more than welcome to pull your rig along side the house, here, and park it. There's plenty of room for you, and once you're on private property, there ain't nobody can say anything about it."

"Thank you, Sarah." Lucy answered.

"No need to thank me. After what you did for Lisa, I'm just sorry there isn't more I can do. If you'll go most of the way around the block, so you come to the west end of the alley, you can come down it and pull up next to the house. It'll be a little close, but you can make it - before Bill died, we used to keep our boat next to the house, and did the same thing to get it parked."

Lucy and I both stood up, followed by Sarah and Lisa. I told them "Thank you for the supper - it was delicious."

"I'm glad you liked it - it's been some time since I've cooked like that, and had folks enjoy it as much as you and Lucy did", Sarah replied.

We made our way to the front door, and wished each other a good evening before Lucy and I went out to the Monster. Following Sarah's instructions, we were soon parked and leveled close to her house; as she'd said, it was a bit close, but we made it.

The next morning, Lucy and I unhooked my car from the back of the Monster and went out for breakfast. The people we met were friendly enough, and the food at the little cafe we ate at was pretty good. If somebody didn't know better, they'd think it was just a happy little town.

The morning went by quietly as Lucy and I took care of a few things - some laundry, a little grocery shopping, and so on. We'd just gotten out of the Monster to go out for lunch when Sarah appeared from behind her house, saying "I was just coming out to see you. I called one of those folks you told me about last night - Amy. When she found out that I was calling about you, and doing it long distance, she called me back so that I wouldn't

have to pay the long distance bill. I'm glad she did - we were on the phone for the better part of two hours!"

Lucy and I smiled, and Sarah went on "Anyway, she told me plenty about you, Dan - and you, too, Lucy. She wanted to know if there was any trouble, but I remembered you said you were going to be the ones that did this, so I told her no. I said that I was just calling because we'd met and you'd mentioned her, and I just wanted to get an idea of what kind of people you are. And boy, did she tell me!"

Sarah gave me another speculative look, and went on to say "The way she tells it, you must be some special man, Dan Andrews. Anyway, there ain't no doubt in my mind, now, that what you told me about yourselves last night is the truth. I figured it was, but..."

Lucy assured her "No, that's okay, Sarah; we understand. As for Dan, I think you'll find out for yourself just how special he is - like you said last night, there aren't the words."

"Well, me and Lisa sat down last night, and she told me what all this is about - and I've got to admit that I'm more than a little afraid. Not just for her and me, but for everybody that lives here. If that bastard Purdy is killing folks now, then ALL of us have a long row to hoe in front of us if he stays around."

I spoke up next, telling Sarah "We were just getting ready to go out for some lunch. Would you and Lisa like to join us?"

Sarah looked pleased, and answered "I would, and after seeing Lisa eat last night, I don't expect she'd turn you down, either. Where were you planning on going?"

"We had breakfast at a place called the Sidesaddle Cafe this morning, and we thought we'd see how they were for lunch, too", Lucy answered.

Sarah laughed, and said "Yeah, they're good at breakfast, and sometimes supper's okay there; but for lunch, I think you'll like the Roundup Grill better. Let me get Lisa; we'll be right back."

As promised, both of them were ready to go in just a couple of minutes. We got into my car, and Sarah provided directions to where we were going. When we got there, I think my Volvo felt lonely among all the beat-up pickup trucks in their parking lot.

Once we got inside, it was clear that the Roundup Grill was a popular place for lunch. We had to wait nearly ten minutes before a booth opened up; even then, we were seated before the waitress could get over to wipe the table off for us, then handing us our menus.

As Lucy and I were looking it over, Sarah told us "Pretty much anything they've got here for lunch is good; but if you're hungry enough, you might want to try the chicken-fried steak."

Lucy and I casually looked around, and it didn't take us long to see why Sarah's warning: it looked to me like the cut of meat they used was approximately the same size as Nebraska.

Lucy told her "I don't think I'm quite THAT hungry, thank you! I think I'll just go with one of their cheeseburgers."

Sarah laughed, and answered "Oh, I don't expect you'll be disappointed by it, at all" before turning to me to see what I wanted. I thought it over, and told her "I decided that I might be hungry enough to do some damage to one of those chicken-fried steaks", getting another laugh from Sarah.

It was a couple of minutes before the waitress came over to take our order; Lisa and Sarah opted for some barbequed brisket. It wasn't a minute after the waitress left before she was back with the iced tea that all of us had ordered to drink.

The four of us sat there quietly for a couple of minutes before I asked Sarah "Is it just my imagination, or are a lot of the folks in here giving us the eye when they think we're not looking?"

Sarah looked a little perturbed, but answered "No, I don't think you're imagining it. Me, I'm kind of a pariah around these parts - what with me not having to answer up to Sheriff Purdy as much as the rest. I've still got a few friends, and I've got to be a careful about what I say, and who I say it to, though. That, and I expect that it's gotten around town that Purdy pulled some folks in yesterday, and then had to let them go real quick. I wouldn't be surprised if most of them didn't already figure that you're the ones; us being seen together, it might make things some interesting around here for a while."

"Interesting how", Lucy asked.

Sarah's look got a little worse, and she said "Oh, I wouldn't expect any real direct trouble, mind you - but you, and 'specially me and Lisa, might find things not going for us as good as you might hope they would."

"How's that?", I asked.

Sarah hesitated a few moments, then answered "A body might go to the grocery store, and come out to find somebody done dinged your car door with theirs pretty bad. Or there might be somebody come along in the middle of the night and dump your garbage can all over your yard - just a kid's prank, right? You might find that the spot where you park your car regular suddenly has a handful of nails to puncture your tires. That kind of thing."

Sarah started to tell us more, but the waitress showed up with our orders. She quickly relieved herself of the burden of my chicken-fried steak, then Lucy's cheeseburger - which appeared to consist of about a pound-and-a-half worth of ground beef AFTER

they'd cooked it. What with the bun and fixings, it must have been a good six inches thick. When she saw what she'd ordered, Lucy's eyes widened considerably, causing Sarah and Lisa to both laugh before Sarah told her "I can see I should have warned you about the burgers, too!"

Lisa and Sarah's orders of brisket probably weren't more than a half- to three-quarters of a pound of beef, each. Even from across the table, it was clear that it was fall-apart-if-you-breathe-on-it tender, too. And of course, all of us had a small mountain of home-made French fries.

With my work cut out for me, I picked up my knife and fork and tucked into the steak - and a minute later, put the knife back down: the steak was tender enough that I could cut it with just the fork.

As we ate, we continued to chat with each other - Lisa and Sarah told us what it had been like growing up in a Purdy-controlled county, and Lucy and I told them about our life at home. At one point, Lisa asked us "So what do you think about the food here?"

Without even thinking about it, I answered "Beats grubs!" - and answer that Lucy took pains to explain after seeing the expressions on their faces. When she was done, both of them were laughing.

Along the way, I had a bite of Lucy's burger, and she got a bit of my steak so that each of us could get an idea of how good the other's meal was. When we got down to the end of the meal, I'd managed to put away about three quarters of my steak and perhaps half the French fries. Lucy got through half of her burger and a third of her fries. Lisa finished her brisket, nearly all of her fries, and the few ounces of brisket her mother hadn't finished. As I sat there trying to decide if I'd ever need to eat again, Sarah told us "If you want, they'll put what you didn't finish in a box so you can take it back with you, for later. Don't feel bad; there's plenty of folks here in town that have to do the same thing."

"How in the world can they serve so much food for such small prices?" Lucy asked.

Sarah grinned, and answered "Lucy, you're in cattle country; when the cow you're eating was raised not five miles from here, and the folks that butchered it have their place a couple blocks down the street, beef isn't expensive. And this is Idaho - we GROW those potatoes here."

By the time we'd finished eating, the place had pretty much cleared out; there wasn't any pressure or need for us to hurry about vacating the booth we were in, so we all sat around sipping our iced tea and quietly talking about what Sheriff Purdy might be up to - and what might be done about it. Sarah and Lisa were able to give us some tips on what kinds of things we might look for, and where to look for them.

By the time we were ready to leave, I had a pretty fair idea of what needed to be done - the only question I still had was how much time I had to do it in.

The next couple of days were spent getting things organized, and getting started trying to collect whatever information we could on the good Sheriff Purdy and his sidekick. Lucy happily accepted Lisa's offer to help, and the two of them spent a lot of time in the County courthouse, going through records. Me, I spent a fair amount of time in the Monster, using the computer to do much the same thing Lucy was: gathering information. I also got in touch with some of the people that I knew had gone into law enforcement and security to see if any of them could find out anything that might help.

Each evening, Lucy and I would have supper with Sarah and Lisa, then spend a little time with them chatting about different things.

After a week had gone by, I wanted to check a few things with Sarah while verifying what Lucy and Lisa had brought in. I also wanted to get 'out' a bit, and suggested that the four of us go out for dinner the next night; all three of the ladies were agreeable to the idea.

Sarah and Lisa surprised me by suggesting a restaurant nearly fifty miles away; when I asked why they wanted to go there, both admitted that it was a place that Sarah's deceased husband Bill had taken them for special events.

The next day, all three of them went 'into town' (a larger city in a neighboring county) to get 'fixed up'; I happily stayed behind.

Lucy and I had gone 'out' a number of times on our trip, and I had a pretty good idea of what she would be wearing. As I'd expected, she went with a nice silk suit that showed off her figure; I wore one of the two suits that I'd brought along. It was when Lisa and Sarah turned up that I got surprised. Both had apparently opted for their best dresses, and were made up, coiffed, and generally loaded for bear. Lisa was wearing a simple black dress that only came down to about mid-thigh on her, leaving a nice expanse of attractive leg exposed. Sleeveless, it was also cut a bit low in the front, showing off a nice amount of cleavage. For her part, Sarah was wearing something a little longer that showed her nicely turned calves to good effect. It was sleeveless, too; though not as low-cut as Lisa's, Sarah had a bit more bust to compensate. When the Hammarlunds and Lucy saw each other, there were a few minutes of mutual ooh-ing and ah-ing before we could get in the car and be on our way.

The place that Sarah and Lisa guided us to was pretty well known in the area, and what we were wearing blended in just fine. Dinner was a quiet, pleasant time, and I was able to get the information I was after without messing up the evening's mood.



That was taken care of for me by the two goobers we found planted on my car when we left the place.

"This your car, Mister?" the taller of the two of them yelled/asked as we got close.

"Matter of fact, it is", I answered.

"Ain't Volvo one of those doctor words for a pussy?" he demanded, accompanied by the laughter of his partner.

"Nope. The word you're thinking of is 'peckerhead', peckerhead."

That got his, and his partner's, attention. He slid off the hood of my car and turned to face me. After taking a long swallow from the oversized bottle of beer in his hand, he said "You know, I reckon I might just have to whoop your ass, Mister!"

I looked over to where his partner had slid off the trunk and was moving over to stand next to him before answering "Well, you might, I suppose - but I can promise you that you'll EARN it."

That seemed to give him something to think about for a few moments before he announced "Yup, I'm gonna ENJOY kicking your ass all over this parking lot, smartass!"

I sighed, and told him "Well, don't let the long walk over here stop you from trying".

He got an indignant look on his face, and the two of them walked over to where the four of us were standing. Stopping in front of me, he took another long swallow of beer - then dropped the bottle and tried to hit me.

I blocked his swing, then slid my hand down to grab the back of his; pivoting, I turned him around as I bent his hand forward as though trying to introduce his fingertips to his elbow. As I heard his wrist break, I heard the other one release a sick-sounding 'oooof!'. My dance partner yelled, and drew back his other arm as though to try and use it to hit me. I slid my other hand down his arm, and with a sudden sharp push, bent his elbow the wrong way, accompanied by the sound of bones breaking. He screamed, and fell to his knees, so I finished up by kicking him in the pit of the arm I still had hold of, dislocating his shoulder. When I released him, he fell over onto his side, moaning.

I turned to see how Lucy had done, and saw that she'd apparently kicked HER new friend where his brains were: both hands were holding his crotch as he tried to throw up between gasps for air.

All told, the whole 'fight' couldn't have taken five seconds; behind us, I heard an engine start before somebody yelled "You sumbitch!" - and the click of a revolver's hammer being pulled back. Lucy was looking in my direction, and I saw her eyes go wide as she moved toward where Lisa and Sarah were standing. She was knocking them to the

ground when we heard the parallel sounds of a pistol being fired and a vehicle accelerating.

I heard one round impact something; the other didn't seem to hit anything; I stood back up and drew my pistol. I saw a pickup truck heading away from us with the driver's pistol-laden hand still outside the window.

I emptied one magazine into the fleeing vehicle, replaced it, and got off a couple more shots before the truck swerved to the side and ran - without slowing down in the slightest - straight into a tree some twenty feet farther on.

Turning back around, I headed for Lucy. She saw me coming, and began to stand up, telling me "I'm fine, Dan - and so are they", gesturing to where Lisa and Sarah were just raising their heads.

My next move was toward the couple that had been behind us as we left; both of them were still standing; unhurt, but shaken and stunned.

A couple minutes more, and the restaurant had emptied as people came out to see what all the fuss had been about. The manager of the place saw me with my pistol in my hand, and quickly nodded in agreement when I said "You'll be wanting to call the law about this."

Some twenty minutes later, a Deputy Sheriff's car pulled into the parking lot, followed a few minutes later by a State Trooper vehicle. The deputy accepted my pistol with a little bit of nervousness and secured it in his car. From there, he went over to have a look at the pickup truck, then came back so he and the trooper could begin clearing the area; they'd just about gotten everyone back inside when the Sheriff's vehicle pulled in.

The Sheriff - John Babcock, according to his nametag - came over to where we were standing and asked the question of the night: "So what the Sam Hill is goin' on here?"

I explained to him what had happened - he looked over to where the trooper was standing next to the two goobers, calling in an ambulance for them - and then back to where the pickup truck was hugging the tree after the engine died.

"Deputy, go over there and see who's in that truck!" he called out; the deputy called back "Already did, Sheriff. It's Purdy's boy, Leroy, deader'n shit. One bullet hole in the back of his head; back window's gone, and there's more bullet holes in the windshield, too. Leroy had him a six-gun; prob'ly stole, knowin' Leroy."

The sheriff looked at me, and asked "Where you learn to shoot?"

"Army Special Forces", I answered.

He got a thoughtful look, and asked "You got a permit to be packin' that thing around?"

"Yup. Federal, here in my wallet, if I can pull it out."

He gestured for me to go ahead, and looked it over carefully when I handed it to him.

He finally gave it back, and told me "You just stand there like you been doing while I check this out..."

I told him I would, and he left to go talk to the couple that had been out in the parking lot when everything started. A few minutes later, he went inside, and I saw him talking to the restaurant manager and some of the other people that had been inside.

After a while, he came back out and went over to talk to the deputy. I watched as they talked for several minutes before he came back over toward me.

When he was standing in front of me again, he gave me an appraising look before telling me "That fella you shot was Leroy Schultz. The law around these parts know him pretty good; he's been some some trouble to us until he did a few years in prison for burglary and assault before Purdy put him to work. Those other two are Purdy's boys, too. Now, I don't take kindly to folks gettin' killed - 'specially not when it's in front of the place me and my wife used to like to go to eat. But those other folks over there, they were real plain that those two you hurt started all this, and that you didn't pull your weapon until AFTER ol' Leroy got off a couple rounds. And my Deputy, he tells me that you were real careful not to be doing anything sudden, and that you were real polite about handing over your weapon. He also tells me that he's been hearin' that there's somebody lookin' to see what they can find out about what Purdy's been up to down there in Claude. That be you, Mist er?" before pulling a pouch of chewing tobacco from his pocket and 'loading up'.

I nodded, and told him "Me and my wife - she's the one in the suit - got taken in after Purdy pulled us over while we were helping the girl over there; that's her mother next to her. I know a few cops and some FBI agents, and the way he operated wasn't what I'd call 'law enforcement'. I decided I'd hang around a bit and see what made him act like a cat trying to cover up on a linoleum floor."

The sheriff smiled at my description of Purdy's actions, spit, and told me "Well, there ain't many of us in these parts that care for how 'Sheriff' Purdy operates, our own selves. If you can figure out what he's up to good enough for the law to take care of him, I don't reckon there's many that would complain about it. I want to make sure we understand each other, Mister Andrews: I don't like folks getting killed in my county. But it sure sounds like you only did what you had to, and I can't fault you for that. I'm goin' to give you your gun back, and not press any charges. But I don't want any more trouble in this county, either. Do we understand each other?"

"We understand each other just fine, Sheriff", I answered.

"That's good, Mister Andrews. I'll ask you to come up here tomorrow so we can take a sworn statement from you. Once you've done that, you and your missus can be on your way any time you want. Those other ladies with you might have to come up here to testify when we take those other two to trial, but likely not - we know those boys pretty fair, too."

Having had his say, he went over to the deputy's car, got my pistol, and brought it back to me. He looked on in approval when I checked to make sure it was 'safe' before putting it back in the holster.

Satisfied, he started walking away, turned back toward me, spit, and said "Now, any ruckus you stir up down there for Purdy, THAT ain't in my jurisdiction." before giving me a half-grin and heading back for his car, where he got in and drove off. I think it would have been a fair statement to say that Sheriff Babcock might get a little enjoyment out of seeing Purdy get his comeuppance. One of the few constants I'd seen in my life was the fact that GOOD cops didn't like BAD cops - at all.

When he was gone, Lucy, Sarah, and Lisa all came over to me, and the four of us shared a group hug that ended only when Lisa saw that one of Leroy's bullets had flattened one of the tires on my car. It was a few minutes work to change it; by the time I was done, enough emergency vehicles had left that I could back out of my parking space and head us back to Sarah's place. As we went by the pickup truck, all of us could see that I'd shot out the back window, and that there were a number of holes in the windshield, just as the deputy had said - all of them clustered around where the driver's head would have been.

The quiet on the ride home lasted until we got inside Sarah's house and had all taken a seat around the dining room table. Only then did Sarah tell us "If I hadn't seen it, I likely wouldn't have believed it - that two people would be that willing to help folks that were in trouble" - giving me and Lucy a look of wonder. She looked over at Lisa, then back at us before saying "I knew you two were trying to help us, and you were trying to watch out for us - I knew why you were trying to keep you and Lisa together, Lucy! - but I really didn't understand what it meant when you told us you couldn't stand to see folks being done wrong by bad people. Now I do."

She took a deep breath, and added "Lucy, you told me that I'd find out for myself just what kind of man Dan is - and I have. And don't think that I didn't notice that you were the one that got us down onto the ground where we'd be safe, either - or that you put yourself between us and that gun."

With that said, Sarah started quietly crying as she looked from Lisa to Lucy to me and back again. It was only a few moments before Lisa joined her, the two of them sitting there looking at us, tears streaming down their faces.

Lucy got up and went over to give each of them a hug, and after she gave me a look that made it clear I was expected to help out, I got up and joined her; both of us trying to console and/or reassure Lisa and Sarah that everything was going to work out.

After a while, both of them managed to pull themselves back together, and the waterworks dried up. Lucy and I went back to where we'd been sitting, and Lisa told us "Even after you got me out of the jail and away from the sheriff, I've still been afraid that he was going to do something. I mean, me and Charlie, we saw him kill somebody! But you two have been so nice and all, I didn't realize just what it meant, all that stuff you told Momma that night, about you bein' in the Army and all. But now I really do understand it. I just don't know how Dan can be that good to Momma and me, and be so strong and tough, at the same time."

Sarah spoke up, adding "I'm not understanding that part of it, myself. I mean, Bill was a strong man, and he loved me and Lisa with all his heart, but there were still times that his bein' strong got in the way of being lovin', too."

Lucy laughed softly before telling them "I can understand what both of you are saying - believe me, I do! When I first met Dan, I thought he was actually kind of wimpy, and wondered if he might even be gay! But then a few things happened, and the two of us actually talked to each other one night, and I started to get an idea of just how much there is inside him. One of the things that he told me was that after being in the Army, and doing the things he did, he didn't figure that he had to 'prove' anything - that he'd been and done what he needed to. Since then, I've figured out for myself that a real man doesn't have to be rough-and-tough all the time - that he IS strong and brave where it really matters: in his heart and in his mind. Most men, they only get 'macho' or turn into hardasses when they're insecure about themselves, or they're afraid of something and feel like they have to make like they aren't. Dan isn't like that - at all. Like I told you that first night, I've heard about a few of the things that Dan did while he was in the Army, and I have a pretty good idea of what he did in general. Knowing what he's already been through, I don't think that he actually gets SCARED like most of us do." - she held up a hand when Lisa and Sarah started to say something - "Not that I'm saying he isn't careful, or that he doesn't think things through, or that he doesn't worry about things. What I'm saying is that he's already been through enough OTHER troubles - a lot worse than we saw tonight! - that the kind of fear and insecurity that makes most men act up simply doesn't happen with him."

Sarah looked at me and asked "What kind of things HAVE you done, Dan Andrews?"

"I can't talk about the specifics of where I went and what I did in the Army", I answered, adding "Let me just say that on almost every mission I went on, we were either outnumbered and outgunned by a LONG shot, or in places and doing things where we had to keep our heads out of our asses if we wanted to have any hope of getting out in one piece."

Sarah didn't look very reassured by that, and Lucy told her "You've got to understand, Sarah, that the unit Dan was in was what turned into the Delta Force. What they had Dan doing was a lot of classified stuff in places where he wasn't OFFICIALLY there. Like I told you, even I don't know the details of any of it; I've only heard some of the stories -

without the specifics - from people that Dan knew, and I've met. Dan is a real stickler for keeping his word, and unless somebody from the government tells him it's okay to talk more about what he did, he simply isn't going to tell anyone. I know that it makes ME a little crazy, sometimes, too!" - that last getting a smile from Sarah.

Sarah, and Lisa, looked at me in wonder for a little bit before Sarah gave a little shake of her head and said "I knew that my Bill was a good man, and I treasured him every day we were together. But that man sitting there - he's some kind of special. But I reckon you know that."

Lucy smiled and answered "Yeah, I know it - and sometimes I wonder what incredible thing I might have done that brought him into my life."

I added my own two cents worth by saying "And I know just how lucky I am to have met Lucy, and have her as my wife."

Sarah and Lisa saw how Lucy and I looked at each other, and both of them got wistful looks on their faces, realizing just how much Lucy and I loved each other.

Sarah sighed, and Lucy and I turned back to look at her looking at us as she said "Me and Bill, we used to look at each other like that, too - but nothin' like what you two just were". Lisa was looking at us, too, and nodded before saying "Me and Charlie, too."

Sarah looked at me and asked "Didn't I hear the sheriff tell you that you had to go back up there tomorrow to give some kind of statement?" I nodded, and she said "That being the case, I reckon we'd all best be getting some sleep, tonight, then - here it is, after midnight."

Lucy and I nodded, and the four of us stood up; to my surprise, Sarah came around to where I was and put her arms around me, giving me a solid hug and kiss on the cheek before telling me "There ain't words for thanking you, Dan, but I won't be forgetting what you did tonight, either."

Lisa followed her mother's example by giving me a hug and kiss, too, before saying "I won't be forgetting, either, Dan!"

Both of them looked at Lucy, a little nervous and embarrassed by what they'd done, and she just told them "Don't worry about it - I'd want to do the same thing, if I were you."

Relieved, both of them escorted us to the door.

Back out in the Monster, Lucy wrapped her arms around me and gave me a massive hug before telling me "Oh, Dan, I love you so much, and I'm so proud of you!"

I hugged her back, of course, and answered "And me, you."

Lucy released me and stepped back before looking down at herself and saying "Well, so much for THIS suit!" - it was torn in a couple of places, dirty, and most definitely ruined.

I laughed, and told her "Well, I guess if we watch our nickels and dimes for a little while, you can afford to get another one..."

Lucy laughed, too, and said "Well, it was worth it - what this suit cost is nothing compared to how I'd feel if we didn't help them."

That said, the two of us undressed and went to bed - and made love.

It started after the two of us got snuggled next to each other, Lucy 'spooning' in front of me. My hand was cupping her breast (as usual) when she wriggled her cute fanny against me - rubbing her ass cheeks against my penis. Naturally, I started to react, and that only encouraged her to keep at it. Before long, I was fully erect; when that happened she lifted her leg slightly and wriggled around some more until I slid between her thighs, to top of my penis along the cleft of her sex.

I could feel that she was already a little wet, and as she started rocking back and forth to slide her labia along my erection, I could feel her nipple stiffen where it was pressing against my palm.

I lifted my head and gently nibbled her earlobe for a little bit before whispering "Sheesh. Some women. A little gunplay, and they turn into such nymphomaniacs!"

I could FEEL her smile before she turned her head to tell me "I'll have you know, sir, that I was already a nymphomaniac! But only for you..."

I grinned at her, and went back to nibbling on her earlobe as I started playing with her breast - caressing it, gently squeezing it, and softly pulling on her nipple. She moaned deep in her throat, and I could feel her getting even wetter as she continued to slide herself along my penis.

As she continued to spread her woman's oils along my manhood, I extended my attentions to include the back of her neck (something that always got her going), and shoulder. It wasn't long before I could feel how wet and aroused she'd become, accompanied by her almost constant moans of excitement. It wasn't much longer before I heard her gasp "As nice as this feels" - "Damn right!" I interjected - "I want you IN me! Roll over, and I'll be on top..."

That was all the encouragement I needed, and was just a few moments before she was astraddle my hips, my erect and glistening penis in her hand as she positioned the head against her opening. Holding me steady, she slowly impaled herself on me as she groaned with pleasure. Her pleasure was matched by my own as I felt myself being enveloped by her hot, wet channel.

I moved my hands up to cover her breasts, delighting again at how perfectly they seemed to fit my hands, and how her puckered areolas and erect nipples pressed into my palms. A few seconds later, I started moving my hands on them, cupping them to feel their heft. I gently squeezed them before running my thumbs across her nipples to make them stand out even more.

Together, we spend a bit of time enjoying the pleasure we were giving each other before Lucy slowly raised herself up a ways, then slowly lowered herself onto me again. A second later, she did it again as she looked into my eyes and told me "Dear god, how I love making love with you!"

She leaned forward, and I cupped her face in my hands before telling her "I love you, so much more than I could ever say."

She turned her head to kiss the palm of my hand, and I moved my hands to cup her smooth, firm ass as I lifted my head to begin licking and sucking on her nipples. Holding her torso steady so I could continue nursing at her breasts, she started arching her hips to slide herself up and down my penis. It wasn't long before her actions sped up slightly as she got more and more aroused.

For my part, I was enjoying the hell out of what she was doing, too - the feeling of the tight ring of her opening slipping along my manhood, and the way her snug sheath wrapped so tightly around me when she had me fully inside her. She was amazingly wet inside, and I could feel the overflow of her juices begin to saturate my pubic hair, and even trickle down between my thighs; the scent of her arousal filled my nose and increased my own desire.

We continued to make love like that for a long time - slowly, gently, and most of all lovingly.

It was when I noticed that she was starting to tire a bit that I reached up and gently pulled her into my arms to tell her "Let me, now..."

She nodded, and the two of us kissed, deeply and passionately, before I rolled us over. I little adjustment, and she was on her back, her legs spread wide and pulled up to let me enter her as deeply as possible.

Supporting myself over her on my elbows, we were able to continue kissing each other's lips and faces and I started to move myself in her. Pressing myself into her as far as I could, I'd hold myself there for a second before sliding back out of her until only the head of my penis was inside before easing my erection back into her. A couple minutes of such slow-motion lovemaking went by before she groaned to me "Oh, god, that feels so good - but I want more!"

I was more than happy to do as she asked; it wasn't long before I was sliding in and out of her at a pace that I knew - from the way she responded - pleased her.



I don't know how long we made love like that - I only know that there finally came the time when I felt her tighten around me as she softly cried out her pleasure and release. The feeling of her hot womanhood clenching around me as she orgasmed was enough to stimulate me into my own climax; pushing myself into her as far as I could, I felt myself washing her womb with my seed. As I did, I saw her eyes fly open as she called out "Yes! Give it to me!"

For a brief moment, I thought I heard a noise outside the motor home, but it was so soft and so brief that I wasn't sure; then the passion of the moment reclaimed my attention.

Lucy and I continued to hold and kiss, each of us satisfied and happy that we'd been able to give each other such pleasure, and shared the love we felt for each other.

Finally, though, my penis softened and shrank enough to pull free of her; Lucy looked up at me and smiled before saying "That was so nice - but if you don't let me up so I can clean up, we're going to be sleeping in a wet spot, tonight!"

"I think it would be worth it; but I know you wouldn't be comfortable", I answered before raising off of her. She grinned up at me, and I told her "You stay here - I'll take care of it."

I went to the small bathroom the Monster had, and dampened a washcloth with some warm water before grabbing a towel and heading back. I found Lucy lying there with one hand cupping her mons, obviously holding our combined juices inside until I returned. She lifted her hips, and I quickly slid one end of the towel under her so that it would catch the drainage as I went about wiping her pelvis and the area between her thighs clean. Done with that, I dried her off, then took the washcloth and towel and put them in the hamper we kept dirty laundry in after cleaning myself off, too.

Once I was back in bed with her, we reassumed the positions we'd been in to start with, and soon fell asleep.

As had become routine, the next morning Lucy and I went inside the house to have breakfast with Lisa and Sarah - but to our surprise, only Sarah was up and moving. She told us "Lisa got to sleep even later than I did, last night - I think both of us kept remembering what happened. I don't think she got to sleep before late; so she's still up there in bed. So it looks like it's just the three of us for breakfast, this morning..."

Following Sarah's instructions, Lucy and I took our seats as Sarah brought out a big stack of waffles, bacon, sausage, and eggs. As we ate, I noticed that Sarah seemed a bit 'distant' from us. Apparently, Lucy noticed it, too, because after we'd put the dishes in the kitchen

(something Sarah had tried to object to, but finally gave up on: Lucy and I helping clear the table) Lucy asked "Sarah? Did we do something wrong? You seem kind of, well, standoffish this morning."

Sarah finished topping off everyone's coffee, then set the coffeepot aside before answering "No, you didn't do anything wrong. If anything, I did. I ain't going to lie to you, not after all you've done for me and Lisa. I came down to your motor home last night to talk to you. I was going to tell you that me and Lisa had a little bit of a talk after you left last night, and from what she said, and how she said it, I think she might have it in her head to try and, well, go to bed with you" - and with a look at Lucy, added "BOTH of you."

Puzzled, Lucy asked "So what happened, then?"

Sarah flushed slightly, and answered "When I got down there, I started to knock on your door when I heard a noise. I waited a second, and heard another - then I realized you two were... busy."

Lucy nodded her understanding, and asked "Okay, I understand that. But why are you acting strange this morning? I mean, that can't be the first time something like that has happened in your life..."

Sarah smiled briefly and answered "No, that's not the first time. What WAS the first for me, though, was that I didn't leave like I should have. I could hear you two making love in there, and it sounded like you were enjoying it so much, Lucy, that I just couldn't leave. It's been so long since I've got any kind of pleasure like that - at least, not just with myself." - that last followed by a blush as she realized that she'd just admitted to masturbating.

She went on to say "I just stayed there and listened to you, and kept getting more and more excited; when you finally, uh, finished, Lucy, I had my own, uh, pleasure just from thinking about doing that, without even doing anything." - the last part accompanied by another small blush.

"Oh, pooh. Don't be ashamed that you make yourself feel good - ALL of us have done it, and still do it, whether folks admit to it, or not", Lucy told her before adding "As for the rest of it, I suppose I could be upset that you listened, but I'm not. You just told us that it's been a long time since you were with Bill; if you were able to find some pleasure from it, then I'm just glad for you, is all."

Seeing Sarah's continued look of discomfort, Lucy asked "There's more?"

Sarah looked at her lap and fidgeted for a few moments before quietly telling her "Yes, there's more. It wasn't Bill that I was thinking of - it was Dan!" before looking up to see Lucy's reaction.

Lucy reached out and took Sarah's hand before replying "Don't be embarrassed, Sarah. And you don't have to be afraid that I'm going to be upset with you. I know that Dan's a pretty special guy. You aren't the first woman that's wanted to share yourself with him, and I don't think you'll be the last. I'm only sorry that you thought you had to be afraid of what I would say. The only thing I want to know is why you would want to be with him."

Sarah was speechless for a few moments, then asked "You're not upset? That I would think about taking your man to bed?"

Lucy smiled, and shook her head, before Sarah asked "What difference would it make why I wanted him, anyway?"

Lucy answered "Let's just say I'm curious, for now."

Sarah just looked at her for a few seconds, then said "He's what I expect any woman thinks of when she thinks about what a man should be - he's strong, not just in his body, but in his heart, and spirit. But at the same time, he's so gentle and patient and caring. It took me a little bit to realize it, but he's so damn smart, too - we were talking one afternoon, and he started telling me about what he was trying to do, and I suddenly realized that he was thinking about things that I should have thought about, too. He ain't handsome - not like some movie star or anything - but you look at his face and you can see that he's going to keep looking the way he does for a long time; and when you look, you know that there's a person in there, and what kind. I guess the short explanation is that being who and what he is, I reckon I've done fallen in love with him", that last followed by a nervous look at Lucy - then me .

Lucy just smiled, and said "That's what I wanted to hear. Sarah, if you love him - and I believe you do - then I wouldn't mind if you wanted to make love with him."

Sarah could only sit there, stunned, as Lucy went on to explain "Sarah, I told you: you're not the first woman to fall in love with him - for the very reasons that you just told me. And you're not the first woman that's wanted to make love with him. He has made love with some of those women - I not only know about them, but encouraged them to do it, too!"

"How... How can you do that? Let him.. be with other women like that? Aren't you jealous, or worried that he might leave you for one of them?"

Lucy laughed before answering "I can share him like that because I know how he affects women - it's the same way he does ME. I'm not jealous or worried because I know how much he loves me, and our girls. Yes, some of the women he's been with have been younger than I am, and prettier, too - but I know how much he loves ME, and it's more than I thought anyone COULD be loved. And I love him, too, just as much. I don't only love him, I TRUST him. I know that if he's willing to make love with a woman, she's got to be a good person: honest and trustworthy and all the things people should be. And I know that if she's that good of a good person, she'll understand that she's only getting to

'borrow' him for a little while - that after he's made her as happy as she's ever been, he'll still come home to ME."

Sarah just stared at her, and Lucy went on "There's something you have to understand about us, me and Dan: we have a way of thinking about - and dealing with - people that's a LOT different than anyone else. There's something I'd like you to do, Sarah - that's sit there a minute, and think about how you've seen me and Dan treat other people: waitresses, you and Lisa, and so on. Then think about WHY we'd treat people that way."

Lucy and I sat there sipping our coffee as we watched Sarah do as Lucy had asked. After a few minutes, she gave a small start, and looked at us before saying "You all treat folks the way they show you they deserve. When you're dealing with a waitress, you treat her good if she IS good at what she does, and you don't if she isn't. I think me and Lisa are decent folks, and you treat us that way. When we left the restaurant last night, Dan dealt with those two the way they deserved. But you're FAIR about it, too - the other day, the girl serving us at the Roundup was pretty busy, so you was more patient with her. Last night, it sounded like Dan was willing to give those two fellas a chance until that one said what he did; after that, Dan wasn't cutting them any slack."

"That's it, exactly", Lucy told her. "We're absolutely fair with people, and treat them the way they SHOW us they deserve. Have you ever helped anybody, just because you didn't think they were getting a fair deal, or because you thought they deserved it?"

"I have. But that's a far piece from what you and Dan are doing, Lucy!"

"Is it? Do you really think it's different?"

Sarah stared at Lucy for a few moments, then said "Okay, it's not different, as far as taking the time to help someone. But how MUCH you're doing to help! You gotta admit, THAT'S different!"

"Of course it is. But when you helped someone, did you ever go a little out of your way to do it? Did it ever cost you anything - even if that cost was something you were willing to pay?"

Sarah started to speak again, stopped, then said "Yes, to both questions."

"The difference between what you were doing, and what WE'RE doing, is that we HAVE more, and can DO more, wouldn't you agree?"

That shut Sarah down for a few seconds before she grudgingly admitted "There ain't no doubt that you got more, or that you can do more." - then, a moment later, with wonder in her voice asked "What kind of people are you, that you're willing to do things like helping the FBI like you did, and even folks like me and Lisa?"

Lucy smiled, and said "If you'll think about it, you already know what kind of people we are. And NOW we're to the point where I can tell you that if YOU want to make love with Dan, too, you're welcome to, with my permission and encouragement, if he's willing."

Sarah sat there and blinked a few times as she thought about what Lucy said about her already knowing what kind of people we were; Lucy and I both knew when she got to the part about being welcome to make love with me when she suddenly gasped, and looked back and forth between us for several seconds. She finally pulled herself together (again) and asked Lucy "You... You'd let me be with him? Just like that?"

"It's not quite 'just like that', if you'll remember how we've been talking, but yes. You said something yourself last night about how Dan and I look at each other, and how much we love each other. Do you really think that I'm afraid he's going to drop me for another woman? Any woman?"

After mulling that one over for a few seconds, Sarah admitted "No, I don't think he'd EVER do anything like that, no how, no way." Then, a second later, Sarah turned to me and asked "What do YOU think about all this, Dan?"

I smiled, and told her "When I look at you, I see a woman that's had some pretty hard times and is still standing up for herself and fighting for what's hers. I see a woman that's got nerve and courage and compassion. I see a woman that has enough sense to know what she knows, and isn't afraid to listen, and learn what she doesn't know. If you wanted to make love with me, I'd be delighted by the opportunity."

As Sarah sat there looking at me, obviously stunned; we could hear Lucy laugh at the expression on her face, followed by Lucy telling her "Sarah, what Dan just told you is exactly how he sees you - and I can promise you that he finds you physically attractive, too, even if he didn't say it."

Sarah turned to Lucy again, and asked "Why wouldn't he say so?"

"Because how a woman looks isn't the important thing to him. What matters - to him, and to me - is what another person is like on the inside, not the outside."

"But how can you know that he thinks I'm pretty?" Sarah asked.

"Because Dan and I both think the same way about women, and I think you're pretty, too."

It took a few seconds for that to sink in before a re-stunned Sarah asked "You... you've been with women, too?"

Lucy answered "Yes, I've been with women, too. When you were growing up, didn't you and another girl ever experiment with each other? Practicing kissing boys, and such?"

Sarah replied "Of course we done some of that - but it ain't the same."

"No, it's not the same. But didn't you get 'feelings' when you were doing it? Didn't it feel good, whether it was another girl, or not?"

Hesitantly, reluctantly, Sarah answered "Yeah, I had some 'feelings', as you put it. And yeah, it felt good, even though it was another girl. But still..."

"But still, it's feeling good and having pleasure. If you and the other person are both doing it because you WANT to, and it feels good, is anyone being hurt? And if no one is being hurt, and it feels good, can it really be all that wrong?" Lucy responded.

Thinking it over, Sarah finally answered "You put it that way, I reckon it can't. But I don't know if I could ever do anything like that, though - I never done it, and I wouldn't know what to do, and I'd be too dang nervous about the whole thing to get any pleasure out of it, I expect."

Lucy just smiled, and said "You'd be surprised how easy it is, when it gets down to it. But you still haven't said whether or not you'd like to be with Dan."

Reminded of what track the conversation had been on before it was derailed, Sarah gave both of us a surprisingly shy look before answering "It being okay with you, Lucy, and Dan being willing, I reckon I would like to be finding some pleasure with him."

"That's fine, Sarah. I've got some research to do at the library, and I can use Lisa's help; I don't expect we'd be back before suppertime, anyway, but I'll make we stay out that long just to be sure. Dan still has to go make his statement, and I wouldn't be surprised if that took most of the morning, so how about if Lisa and I leave after she's had some breakfast? Then you can have some time to get ready before Dan gets back?"

Sarah smiled and said "I can't believe I'm getting help from a married woman about how I can take her man to bed, but that sounds just fine."

Lucy smiled, too, as I did, before she replied "Good. That's what we'll do, then."

Sarah stood up, and told us "Dan, you'd best be on your way, if you're going to be going. I'll go upstairs and get Lisa up so you can get your work done, too, Lucy", before turning and leaving us.

Lucy and I shared a smile and laugh, knowing that we were probably going to change Sarah's definition of what a friend was.

Lucy and I were heading for the front door when we saw Lisa and Sarah coming down the stairs; Lisa gave us a smile - but nothing like the one Sarah shared with us.

It was after lunch when I got back from giving my deposition to Sheriff Babcock. I went into the house to find that Sarah had obviously taken the time to prepare herself by changing into a blouse and skirt, doing something with her hair, and unless my nose deceived me, adding a little perfume. It was equally obvious that she was very nervous, too.

She'd gotten up from the chair she'd been in when I came in, and was standing there fidgeting slightly as I walked over to her. Her head only came up to my chin, and I looked down at her and said "It's okay, Sarah. You don't have to be nervous or afraid; everything's going to be fine."

She smiled up at me, nervously, and said "That's easy enough for you to say, Dan Andrews. I've never done this before, though - not making love with a man that wasn't my husband, and in broad daylight, too."

I put my hand under her chin to steady her before tilting my head down to kiss her - on the forehead, to her surprise. Looking into her eyes, I told her "See? There's nothing to it."

Shyly, she told me "Okay, you made your point - you ain't gonna just jump on me and have at it. But I'm still nervous about all this."

"Sarah, there's nothing to be nervous about. No, I'm not going to just jump on you and have at it. You have to understand that what we're going to do is make love. No, I don't mean that I love you the way I do Lucy - you know it, I know it, and Lucy knows it. But I do love you - for the very things I told you I see in you, this morning. You're what, 35 years old?"

She gave me a playful slap on the arm, and said "Oh, go on, you. Lisa's nineteen years old, and I didn't have her until after Bill and I had been married some years. I'm coming up on my 40th birthday."

I grinned, and told her "Whatever age you are, you've still been in this town a lot longer than I have, and as much as I've taken a dislike to Purdy, I'm sure you must want to be rid of him even more. But you've stayed here and put up with his nonsense, fighting him when you could, and standing up to him, a whole lot longer than I've had to. That takes guts - and courage like that is something I admire in anybody. On top of that, you haven't let what's happened here get you down, or tear you up. You're still on your feet, and still fighting. If you were a man, I'd still love you - but I wouldn't be able to show it to you the way I can with you as a woman."

Sarah listened to that, and had settle down considerably when I lowered my head to kiss her again - this time on the lips; softly and gently and chastely. When I lifted my head again, I could see in her eyes that she accepted that I DID love her, and was willing to love me back, to the same degree.

I put my arms around her, and after only a brief hesitation, she reciprocated. She tilted her head up, letting me know that she was ready to be kissed again. We did, and after a bit, I felt her lips part, followed by her tongue hesitantly touching mine. I opened my mouth to her, and our tongues introduced themselves to each other. Before long, they were dancing in each other's mouths, their activity speeding up as our respective passions were kindled.

When we finally pulled apart again, Sarah was slightly flushed, and told me "I don't know what it is about you, Dan, but you're getting me going like I haven't done for some years!"

I smiled at her and answered "It isn't me doing it - it's YOU. All I'm doing is giving back to you what you're willing to share with me."

She looked at me, surprised, and asked "It's ME doing this?"

"Yes, it's you. I'm just helping out, is all" I replied.

"Then show me just how much you can help!" she commanded, reaching up to pull my head down for another kiss.

As our tongues began to dance again, I moved my arms from around her to let my hands rest on her hips; from there, I began caressing her body: sides and back, gradually expanding my touch until it included her buttocks and breasts - something that caused her to moan softly into my mouth.

When our lips parted, she looked up at me with her desire clear on her face as she softly panted.

"I sure hope you can finish what you started, Dan!" she whispered to me.

"I think I can", I reassured her, smiling.

She searched my face, and finally said "Yeah, I expect you can - and I want to find out!" before taking me by the hand and leading us to the stairs, and then on up to her bedroom. Inside, she released me to close the door behind us. When she turned to face me again, I could see that she was a little afraid, and more than a little shy. I walked over to her and kissed her on the forehead again; she responded by pulling my head down for another kiss that soon ended as the last one had - leaving her panting softly and flushed with desire.



Looking up at me, she said "I ain't never done this before - making love in the daylight, and all. It's been some time since I was Lisa's age, and I know that I'm not as pretty as I used to be. And there's never been any man that's seen and known my body except my husband, so I'm some scared by all this."

I told her "Don't be afraid. Be happy and proud knowing that you ARE loved, and that men DO find you attractive and desirable."

With that, I lowered my head to kiss her; when we were done, I cupped her face in my hands and told her "Sarah, I know that you're a loving woman, and I'm honored that you would share some of that love with me. If you're willing, and you'll let me, I can help you find happiness and pleasure."

Looking at me steadily, she answered "I AM willing, and I DO want you to."

With that, she reached for the buttons on her blouse; I quickly covered her hands with mine, telling her "Let me do that - I like unwrapping presents!" - getting a smile from her as she let her hands drop to her sides.

Carefully, I began undoing the buttons, and as each bit of her skin came into view, I would place a small, soft kiss on it before moving on. By the time I had all the buttons undone, she was panting softly and holding my head in her hands. I slowly opened her blouse to find that she was wearing a bra much like the one Lisa had revealed in the Sheriff's office - half-cups that did nothing to cover her half-dollar size areolas, and small, pink nipples. I moved behind her and slid the blouse off her shoulders, then laid it across the back of a chair before turning back to put my arms around her and cup her breasts in my hands. She pressed her breasts into my hands, and I let my fingertips begin playing with her nipples, feeling them erect under my touch. After a minute or so, I reached between her breasts to unfasten the bra, then slid it down her arms so it could keep the blouse company. When I was behind her again, I could see that her breasts were full and rounded, only faintly sagging because of her age and childbirth. I happily cupped them in my hands again, softly caressing and squeezing them as I began kissing her neck and shoulders.

It took only a couple of minutes before she was panting again, her hands over mine as she guided my attentions on her breasts.

I finally began expanding my exploration of her body, extending the touch of my hands to include her belly and waist and hips and sides; eventually, I moved to where her skirt was fastened. When she felt me touching there, I felt her tense slightly for a moment, then accept what I was going to do.

It was only a few moments before I was slowly sliding her skirt across her hips and down her legs - and discovering that she was wearing a thong instead of panties, and that the only thing holding up the stockings she was wearing was their understandable attraction

to her legs. In front of me, I saw the delightful globes of her ass - rounded and obviously firm.

After she'd stepped out of the skirt, I tossed it over on top of her blouse and bra, then leaned forward to give each of her wonderful ass cheeks a soft kiss, surprising her. Putting my hands on her hips, I gently guided her to turn around before slipping my fingers under the waistband of the thong. Looking up into her eyes, I could see that she was apprehensive - but willing. Smiling at her first, I lowered my head again as I started easing the thong down her body - and revealing the small, dark wedge of pubic hair that covered her mons. From the look of it, she didn't trim it; it appeared to be naturally short and dense, coming only a short distance onto her lower belly. When the thong had joined the rest of her clothes, I leaned forward again to place another soft kiss on her - at the very edge of her pubic thatch. Placing my hands at her ankles, I slowly and softly drew my hands up one of her legs until I was at the top of her stocking. Moving carefully, I gently rolled it down her leg until I was able to slip it off her foot; then I went back and did the same thing for its mate. By the time I was done, the faint scent of her arousal let me know that my actions were having the desired effect.

Standing up again, I deliberately let her see me looking at her nude body; in reply to the slightly nervous questioning look on her face, I told her "You're beautiful." - which visibly relieved her.

Stepping back, I reached up to undo my own shirt buttons before she asked me "Can... can I do that?"

I smiled and lowered my hands to my sides in answer.

Without hesitation, she stepped close to me and began undoing the buttons on my shirt. When she'd gotten them all, she opened it up, revealing my torso - and some of the scars that I'd earned while in the Army. She looked up at me in sympathy for what she knew I must have felt, then reached out to trace each one before leaning forward to give it a soft kiss. That done, she went on to caress my body - chest, shoulders, and waist before slipping my shirt off and putting it with her things.

When she was finally ready to continue, her hands were trembling slightly as she reached for the buckle of my belt; but she took a deep breath and settled down, and soon had it unfastened. She then fumbled a bit when trying to undo my pants. I sucked my gut in a little to help her, and she looked up to smile at me before getting them undone, too. She carefully took hold of the tab of my zipper, and resolutely pulled it down. Slipping her thumbs under the my waistband, she began to slide my pants off, kneeling as she did. When the waistband cleared my under shorts, I heard her gasp softly when she saw the bulge in them. When they were clear of my feet, she set my pants on the seat of the chair where I'd put her clothes; otherwise, the weight of my pistol would have pulled them onto the floor.

She knelt there, looking at my shorts, for several seconds before gathering up the nerve to reach out and slide her hands inside the waistband. Another deep breath, and she began sliding them off - gasping loudly and hesitating as my penis and balls slipped free. A moment later, she finished sliding them down my legs, and I stepped out of them. My shorts joined my pants, and she turned back to look at my flaccid manhood. After a bit she looked up at me, then back down to my penis, before leaning forward to kiss the edge of my pubic hair - just as I'd done to her - before standing up again.

Taking her into my arms, I gave her a hug and kiss before saying "There, now, that wasn't so hard, was it?" with a smile.

She grinned back and replied "No, not as tough I was afraid it would be."

Taking her hand, I gestured that she should take the lead in getting us over to her bed; once there, she released her hold on me long enough to pull the covers down before turning back to me.

Taking her hands in mine, I kissed each of them then guided her to lay down on the bed, and lie down on my side next to her.

I reached out and put my hand on her belly as I looked into her eyes, and told her "If you're really afraid, or if you think you're too nervous, we can stop this. The last thing I want to do is hurt you, or make you afraid, or do anything that would cause a problem for you."

She smiled at me, and confidently told me "No, I'm not afraid or too nervous. The way you've been, I know you're not going to do anything to hurt me, or rush me. The only problem I'm going to have is if we don't finish this!"

I smiled back and said "You said you've never done anything like this before" - she interrupted me to say "Me and Bill, I guess you could say we were 'old-fashioned' - maybe even boring. There's a lot of things that I've heard about, that we never did."

I went on to tell her "If you want, we can try some of those things - together. I'm not going to be upset with you even a little bit if there's ANYTHING that you don't want to do. We're here to make LOVE, and if one of us is doing something we don't WANT to do, then what's happening isn't love. If I start to do something you don't want me to do, tell me, and I'll stop - no problem, and no hurt feelings. The same way, if there's something you DO want me to do - or do yourself - then don't be afraid to say so, or do it. Okay?"

She smiled again, and happily nodded her understanding and agreement.

With that out of the way, I lowered my head to kiss her - and was surprised when I felt her take my hand and move it up to her breast. Thus encouraged, I gladly started caressing it, and toying with her nipple for a little bit, before moving my hand to tend to the other as we continued kissing.

After a bit, I diversified my kisses to include her throat and shoulders and next and ears - and it wasn't long before she was panting and flushed with arousal. When I saw that, I began easing my way down her body, kissing along the way, until I got to her breasts. Taking a nipple between my lips, I gently pulled on it as I flickered my tongue across its tip before releasing it to 'snap' back into place. Placing my mouth over the end of her breast, I softly 'inhaled' it, sucking on her puckered areola and 'chewing' on her nipple - actions that had her hands in my hair as she held my head in place so I didn't stop too soon...

I went back and forth, from one breast to the other and back again, delightfully doing whatever I could to bring her dark pink nipples to attention as my hand caressed its way down her body to the dark thicket covering her mons. When my hand first slid between her legs, I heard her gasp before she readily opened her legs to give me access to her mound, and the treasure between her thighs.

My mouth was filled with her breast when I slowly traced a finger between her wet and engorged labia; she lifted her hips in response to my probing, letting me know that continued contact was MORE than welcome.

My next touch was a little deeper, eliciting a groan from her, and a little longer - long enough that I was able to feel the nubbin of her clitoris, something that stimulated her into crying out in pleasure.

In short order, she was moaning almost constantly, her pelvis lifted completely off the bed as I let my fingers explore her womanly charms.

When I had both of her nipples at full erectness, I raised up to share a long, deep kiss with her before kissing my way down her body again - and surprising her, I think, when I didn't stop at her breasts.

When I got past her navel, she asked "What are you fixin' to do, Dan?", her tone of voice letting me know that she pretty much knew the answer.

"I was hoping that you would let me show you another way that a man and woman can enjoy each other's bodies", I replied

Looking doubtful, she told me "I... I heard of it, but me and Bill, we never did anything like that. I don't know that I want you doing that - I always thought it sounded kind of... dirty, or wrong. And I've never had anyone see me, down there."

I smiled to her, and said "Sarah, I promise: it's not dirty. And it's not wrong, if I do it because I want to - and I do! - and you're willing. Before you say 'no', how about if you let me do it for a little, and THEN decide if its really dirty or wrong?"

Talking to herself, I heard her say "Lord knows, I been wrong before." before answering "You'll stop if I say to?"

I assured her I would, and after a small nod from her, I continued where I left off.

Eventually, my lips found their way to her pubic fleece, and beyond. As I started to move between her legs, she spread them for me, opening herself to my perhaps dubious mercies.

When I had a clear view of her pubis, I stopped for a few moments to look at her - the way her cleft was visible underneath the dark soft mat of her pubic hair; how her short, slightly-thick labia were glistening with the moisture that had escaped her; how her clitoris was making an appearance under its cloak of flesh. I lifted my eyes to look at her, and saw that she was a trifle apprehensive; I quickly told her "Thank you for sharing this with me - a woman's flower in full bloom" - something that obviously surprised - and delighted - her.

Lowering my head again, I extended my tongue and drew it up through her cleft, between her labia - accompanied by her gasped "Oh, god, that feels so good!"

I happily licked up the overflow of her oils - light and musky, but somehow sweet, too - before applying myself to finding out just how deep her previously-hidden sensuality ran: using my lips to gently 'nibble' on her labia; putting my whole mouth over her opening and softly sucking; fluttering my tongue across her rapidly-erecting clitoris; pressing my stiffened tongue into her opening and though making love to her with it; taking her clitoris and softly sucking on it. It seemed that everything I did had a positive effect on her - I was softly circling her clitoris with my tongue when her legs suddenly tightened around my head as she cried out in orgasmic release.

Even as massive waves of pleasure were coursing through her body, I continued to stimulate her - not just her clitoris, but her labia and vaginal opening, too. Only when her legs fell away from my head did I raise my head to look at her and see that she was still deep in a post-orgasmic bliss.

I moved up to lie next to her again, taking her into my arms and gently caressing her as she slowly recovered from what had obviously been a powerful climax. Eventually, her began to stir, and a bit later, her eyes flew open. Seeing me lying there holding her, she threw her arms around me and pulled me down for a kiss before she realized that the wetness on my face was hers. Only after our kiss ended did she seem to realize that she'd gotten a sample of her own juices. Blushing, she licked her lips, and asked "That's what I taste like? Down there?"

I grinned and answered "Yes. From the expression on your face, I think maybe you know why I like to do that, now" - earning myself another blush before she said "It... It's not what I thought it would taste like."

"If you think you want to try, I know that Lucy would be willing to help you decide if you really like it, or not."

Sarah looked at me doubtfully as she said "I don't know if I could do that. I've never done anything like that before - being with another woman, I mean. I wouldn't know what to do!"

I took her hand and kissed it before answering "From what Lucy has told me, it's actually pretty easy - whatever feels good to you, do it to the other woman."

Sarah's look told me she wasn't too sure about that idea, and I let the matter drop to ask her "So, do you think that's something you might like to try again, sometime?"

She gave me a positively radiant smile before answering "Yeah, I think I'd like that!"

I grinned at her, making her blush again.

We lay there together for several minutes as she got herself together again. I knew she was ready to start up again when I saw her hesitantly reach toward my penis, then stop. I told her "Sarah, it's okay. If you want to touch me there, you can. I don't mind, really!"

She gave me a shy grin, and said "I don't reckon you would, either!" - then a moment later asking "I... I never really got to look at a man before. Me and Bill, well, like I told you, we were a bit old-fashioned that way. Is it okay?"

"Of course it is. Look, touch - do whatever you want to. This is YOUR time. If you do anything that doesn't feel good - which I know would be by accident - I'll let you know. Go ahead, take your time, and enjoy yourself."

Looking like a kid that had just been told she could have ice cream before supper, Sarah didn't delay moving around to where she could not only touch me, but get a good look at me, too.

For the next several minutes, I waited patiently as she first took a good look at all my workings, then used her hands to start moving things around. She was gentle and careful, and never did anything that was even the slightest bit uncomfortable.

Of course, once she started touching, it wasn't all that long before I started to respond. When she was satisfied, she wrapped her hand around my erect penis before telling me "You feel like you're about the same size as Bill. Are all men this big?"

I laughed, and she started to look hurt until I told her "Honestly, Sarah - I'm about average in size. There are some men that are smaller, and some that are bigger. It's kind of like a woman and her breasts - there are a very few that are really small, and a very few that are really big; all the rest kind of fall in between somewhere, with most pretty close to the middle."

She nodded her understanding, and began softly stroking me.

After a little bit of that, she gave me a devilish look and tilted her head down to kiss the head of my penis before looking to see what my reaction was. I just smiled, and reminded her "Remember, I said you could do what you wanted to, and I wouldn't be upset with you. Now I'll tell you that you won't surprise me, or offend me, either."

Content that I wasn't going to be grossed out or think badly of her, she turned back to where she had my erection in her hand, and tentatively stuck her tongue out to taste it. Satisfied that it wasn't as bad as she'd likely been afraid it would be, she didn't hesitate to open her mouth and take the head inside.

"That will feel better for me, and be easier on you, if you'll use some of your saliva to keep things slippery", I told her. She gave me a small nod of her head, and I felt her using her tongue to do as I'd suggested.

She was hesitant, at first - not knowing what to expect. But as she continued, I gave her plenty of feedback on how different things she was doing felt to me. After a bit, she let me slip from her mouth and continued to use her hand, eventually resulting in a drop of pre-cum on the end of my penis. She paused and looked at it for a few moments before asking me what it was. I told her, then went on to explain that if she kept doing what she was, then I would climax.

"That's when you squirt your juice, right?" she asked.

I agreed that that was what happened, and said that if she wanted that to happen, she could either continue using her hand on me, or if she wanted, she could go back to using her mouth. She looked a bit doubtful at that, asking "Wouldn't you squirt in my mouth, then?"

I said that that was one possibility, and she said "I don't think I'm quite ready for THAT to happen, yet", apologetically. I assured her that was fine, and said that if she wanted to get an idea of what it tasted like, then she could find out from the little sample she could see. She thought it over for a few moments, then touched her finger to it before slowly putting it in her mouth. She got a thoughtful look on her face and said "I guess it's not so bad. A little salty, but okay", blushing slightly.

I smiled and told her she was doing just fine, which seemed to reassure her.

Then she gave me a Look, and said "If you're going to squirt someplace, I want it to be in ME!"

I smiled and told her "I think I'd like that better, too!" - making her smile.

She suddenly sobered, and told me "The first time I was with Bill, it hurt me some, inside. I know that was because I was a virgin when we married; but I also know that it was because I'd never had a man inside me before, and I was a lot smaller inside than Bill was on the outside."

I nodded my understanding, and she went on "I'm thinking I'm kind of in that situation again - its been over five years since Bill died, if you know what I mean."

"I DO understand, Sarah - and the last thing I want to do is hurt you. But we can do things so that you don't have to be hurt, now. If you want to move over on top of me, we can use our mouths on each other; then when you think you're ready, YOU can be on top, so that you're in control of how fast I'm inside you."

She thought that over for a second, then nodded, saying "I understand what you're saying. Yeah, I think I'd want to do it that way." Putting words into action, she moved around so that she could lift one leg and settle herself over me, leaving us in the classic '69' position - something she asked and I verified before she lowered her head to take me into her mouth again.

Over the next few minutes, she slowly applied herself to keeping me erect as I delighted in being able to again sample her nectar and bring her to arousal - and beyond, as I tongued her through another climax; when she'd recovered from it somewhat, she eagerly resumed where she'd left off. She finally released me from between her lips again to tell me that she was ready, I greeted her announcement with mixed emotions - regret that I had to stop what I was doing, and anticipation of what we'd be doing next!

Sarah remembered what I'd told her about using her saliva to keep things slippery; she left a coating of it on my penis when she moved to turn around and position herself straddling my waist.

Looking down at me, she asked "What do I do now?"

"Get hold of me, and move yourself into the right position. When you're ready, just start sitting down on me. If it hurts or feels uncomfortable, you can stop and wait. Once I'm inside you, if you'll lift up a little every now and then, it will help spread your wetness around and keep you comfortable."

She nodded her understanding, and reached down to take hold of my penis, lifting it up to position it. She realized she needed to adjust her position a trifle, and did. Lifting up slightly, she slid the head of my penis between the folds of her labia and lowered herself again so that I was pressing against her opening. Tentatively at first, then with more confidence, she began to press herself down on me. After a few tries, I could feel myself starting to slip into her; she could feel it, too, and let a little more of her weight press down on me. A couple seconds later, I slipped through the incredibly tight ring of her



opening accompanied by a small gasp from her as she quickly stopped her descent to hold herself steady over me.

I reached up to put my hands on her hips, applying just enough pressure for her to know that I was only trying to steady her. She gave me a smile, and started to press herself down - gaining perhaps an inch before stopping again.

"Are you okay? You're not hurt or anything are you?" I asked.

"Oh, no, I'm just fine. You feel so BIG in me, but it doesn't hurt, or anything", she replied.

She waited a few more moments before lifting herself up, then settling back down - and settling a full two inches farther onto me. I could feel how amazingly tight she was - it was almost as though she were a virgin, she was so small inside.

But she was also incredibly wet, which must have been what made it possible for her to slide onto me so easily. I knew she was being stretched inside, but she didn't show any signs of pain or discomfort, so I just let her continue at whatever pace she set for herself.

A minute or so later, she repeated the cycle, ending with another inch of my manhood buried in her tight, wet sheath. This time, she waited a bit longer before raising up a bit and settling down - stopping only when her ass was firmly planted on my thighs: as she settled down, I heard her say "Dear Lord, how I've missed this!"

With my penis firmly embedded in her, there wasn't any need for me to hold her hips any more, and I gladly moved my hands up to cover her breasts - something she appreciated, too, since she covered my hands with hers and squeezed, letting me know that she wanted me to play with them.

So I did, grateful for the opportunity to distract myself from the incredible sensations that her every motion and movement generated around my manhood.

As I cheerfully played with her breasts, Sarah was going about the process of getting used to having me inside her, and (re?)discovering how to control and use her vaginal muscles.

Finally, though, she was ready to become a more active participant in our love-making: raising herself up until only the head of my penis was inside her, she then slowly lowered herself back down, moaning softly as I again filled her. A pause of a few moments, and she did it again - her head thrown back in pleasure as she impaled herself on me. Over the next several minutes, her actions over me slowly increased in speed as the lengths of her movements grew shorter; it wasn't long before she was in almost constant motion as she slid herself up and down nearly half my length, groaning and gasping in pleasure and arousal as the liquid sounds of our coupling filled the room.

Her face and shoulders were flushed with her excitement when she finally settled down on me again; looking at her, I could see from the fine sheen of perspiration on her that she was tired from her efforts. I managed to get her attention, and asked "Would you like to try something else now, so that you're not the one doing all the work?"

She managed to grin at me before gasping out "This can't be work - it feels too good!"

I grinned back, and said "That's true - so would you like to take a rest and let ME be the active one, then?"

She nodded, and asked "What do you want to do now? Or should I ask HOW do you want to do now?" - the last with a bawdy smile.

"How about if you get on your hands and knees, and I get behind you?" I asked.

She considered it for a moment, then said "That's the one they call 'doggie style'?" - I nodded, and she went on "I always thought that looked kind of... sexy. I'd like to try it!"

Reluctantly, she lifted herself up again - far enough that my penis pulled free of her with a soft popping noise. She blushed, but didn't let it slow her down from moving more to the middle of the bed and leaning forward until she could support her torso with her arms. I quickly sat up, then kneeled and moved behind her; the sight she presented me with her nicely curved ass sticking out and the glistening petals of her vaginal lips readily visible amid her pubic hair. I paused for a moment to try and memorize the sight of her before moving forward again.

Once in position behind her, I levered my penis down, sliding it between the folds of her labia and eliciting a gasp from her at the contact. She pressed back a little, and it was only a moment before I was pressing against the entrance to her vagina. Holding her by the hips, I pressed forward, burying myself in her in a single slow stroke as she groaned in response.

Leaning forward, I was able to cup her breasts in my hands as I began arching my back to ease myself out of her as slowly as I could - accompanied by her moan of disappointment. When nearly my entire length was outside her, I reversed direction, making my in-stroke just as slow and deliberate.

Over the next couple of minutes, I steadily increased the speed and force of my thrusts into her - and listened as she voiced her increasing arousal and pleasure as I found a combination of tempo and 'enthusiasm' that was enough to continue increasing her pleasure while keeping myself from climaxing too soon: I knew that I wanted to give her more than just one orgasm as we made love.

Several minutes went by before I felt Sarah's wonderfully tight vagina begin clenching around me as she threw her head back and cried out with the start of her release. I continued to piston in and out of her - greatly aided by her ample wetness - as spasm after

spasm of pleasure coursed through her body. As they were happening, I could feel her hot channel tightening around me and adding to my own pleasure; it would have been entirely too easy to let the sensations she was creating around me to push me into my own climax.

Gradually, the power and duration of the forces running through her body began to slacken. When they'd weakened enough, I could see that the power of her release had left Sarah considerably weakened. I put my hands on her hips again to steady her, but she'd been affected more than I realized. She struggled not to let it happen, but her weakened arms slowly folded until her upper body was lying on the bed. I stopped my thrusts into her and leaned forward to ask "Sarah - do I need to stop?"

She managed to move her head so she could look at me in something akin to awe as she softly asked "Want you to stop?! I thought you were finished!"

"No, I haven't finished yet - unless you want me to", I answered.

She found the energy to emphatically tell me "Don't you dare!" - then added "I just need to rest a second, and get some energy back."

"How about if we make things a little easier on you, and we just get you turned over so I can be on top?" I asked.

She thought that over for a second, and admitted "That might be better", reluctantly.

I carefully eased myself out of her, and then helped ease her the rest of the way onto the bed. From there, she was able to roll onto her back. She'd spread her legs for me and I'd moved between them when she looked up at me and said "I sometimes had orgasms with Bill; but never anything like THAT!"

I smiled, and answered "I'm glad you enjoyed it."

She gave me a lopsided grin and answered "Enjoyed ain't quite the word for it!" before looking down to where my erection was waving in the air, twitching in time with my heartbeat. Looking up at me with lust on her face, Sarah told me "I'm ready - I can see you are, too..."

I responded by simply leaning over to support myself on my arms over her as she lifted her legs to tilt her pelvis up toward me. A little minor adjustment, and I could feel the head of my penis wedged between her labia. Arching her hips, Sarah managed to lift herself off the bed enough to slip the entrance of her vagina onto me so that my glans was inside her. My hips followed hers down; when hers got to the bed, mine kept going, pressing my penis deep inside her wet channel. As I re-entered her, her eyes widened, and I could hear it as she released a deep moan of pleasure.

Holding myself over her, I started moving in her again - slowly withdrawing my manhood before arching my hips to re-enter her, accompanied by her moans of pleasure and arousal. I looked down to where we were joined and watched as her vaginal lips would all but disappear as I entered her, then reappear and look as though they were trying to hold me inside when I withdrew. Sarah saw where I was looking, and lifted her upper body far enough to see what was happening - and watched, almost mystified, as it happened the next half-dozen times or more before whispering "I never knew it could look so sexy!" before lying back again.

Sarah soon recovered from the intensity of her previous orgasm, and began arching her pelvis up to welcome each of my thrusts into her; such encouragement only served to make me increase the pace of my actions.

I was beginning to feel the pressure in my balls when I started to feel a 'fluttering' around my penis. It took only a few more strokes in her before it became clear that Sarah was on the verge of her second orgasm since we'd started making love; knowing that she was close, I decided that the time was right for me to find my own release as well. In response to the increased pace and force of my penetrations, Sarah responded by arching her hips off the bed again and trying to spread her legs even more, making it possible for me to enter her as deeply and easily as possible. It was only a couple more minutes, and I felt her start tightening around me again - something that increased the liquid noises of our coupling. A bit more, and she once more fell into what was an obviously deep abyss of orgasmic release.

The delightful sensation of her tight, wet womanhood clasp at my erection was soon more than I could withstand. With a deep groan of my own, I pressed myself into her as far as I could just as the first hot pulse of my semen erupted from the end of my penis. Even as the first spurt of my cum washed over her womb, Sarah's eyes flew open and she nearly screamed "I can feel it! Oh, god, it's so good!" as her hot vagina grasped me even tighter.

I held myself inside her as I unloaded my balls in her, accompanied by the sounds of her moans and gasps as she experienced her own orgasmic bliss.

After I felt the last twitch of my penis in her, I moved to support myself on my elbows over her, feeling her hard nipples pressing into my chest. I softly kissed her several times before I realized that she was so far gone into the aftershocks of her own pleasure that she simply wasn't able to respond. Only when I felt my shrunken penis pull free of her intimate grasp did I move off of her. Thinking that if she was anything like any of the other women I knew, she wouldn't be comfortable leaking our combined fluids, I got up and found the bathroom where I quickly dampened a washcloth and grabbed a hand towel before heading back to her.

When I sat on the bed again, I could see that she still wasn't quite recovered, so I gently and carefully went about cleaning her, then myself. When I was done, I put the washcloth and hand towel in the laundry hamper I'd seen in the bathroom, returning to find that she

was nearly coherent again. I moved to lie next to her, then took her in my arms and held her.

When she had fully recovered, she turned her head and looked up at me in open admiration as she said "I used to have orgasms with Bill - at least, I thought they were orgasms, until I learned better from you! Dear Lord, I didn't know it could be like that!"

I gave her a hug, and she went on "I was really surprised at how easy you went in; I guess what we done together before got me a lot wetter inside than I knew."

I grinned at her, and asked "So you enjoyed it, then?"

She gave me a Look, and answered "I reckon you know I did."

She suddenly gave a small start, and shyly told me "I think I need to get up - I don't want to be staining these sheets..."

I continued to hold her, and replied "It's already taken care of. Just lie here and relax and get yourself back together."

Her hand quickly stole to her pelvis, and after a moment, she blushed and looked up at me before asking "You... You cleaned me up?"

"I did."

She blushed even harder and asked "Why? Why would you do something like that? I didn't figure men cared much about a woman AFTER they found their pleasure."

I told her "First, I'm not most men" - "I'll vouch for that!" she interjected - "Second, I didn't figure you would want to be feeling messy or sticky, afterwards. And finally, you're somebody that I love and care about, and I just wanted you to be able to enjoy yourself after we made love, without having to worry about anything. So yes, I did it. Is that a problem?"

"No, it ain't a problem - far from it. It's just some surprising, is all. But I guess you being the kind of man you are, I shouldn't be too surprised that you'd think like that." she told me, taking my arm from where it was resting across her belly and moving it up so that my hand covered her breast.

We lay there like that for several minutes before she turned to look up at me again, and said "I don't know if you really heard something I said to you and Lucy, this morning."

"You mean about how you think Lisa is going to want to go to bed with me and Lucy?"

She grinned, and I told her "Yes, we heard you - BOTH of us."

"So what are you figuring to do about it?"

"Nothing."

Mystified, she asked "What do you mean 'nothing'?"

"Just what I said: nothing. Until or unless she actually says or does something, there isn't much Lucy or I CAN do. If she does do or say something, THEN we can find out why, and respond accordingly."

Still curious, Sarah asked "Why would it make any difference why she wanted to go to bed with you? She's only nineteen, and even I know she's right pretty!"

I answered "Do you remember when Lucy was talking to you this morning about making love with me? And she asked you WHY you wanted to before she said it was okay with her?"

Sarah nodded, and I went on "If you had said that you wanted to show me how grateful you were for bringing Lisa back, or getting her out of Purdy's jail, or because of what happened last night, she would have told you 'no'."

Baffled, Sarah asked me "So why did she say YES, then?"

"Because the reasons you wanted to make love with me were right: you wanted to share yourself with me because of the kind of man you think I am, because you love me, right?"

She nodded, and I continued "If a woman lets a man have sex with her for money, we both know what kind of people they are, don't we?" - she nodded - "Now, what kind of people are they if she lets him have sex with her after he takes her out for an expensive dinner and a movie, and maybe some dancing afterwards? Same kind of people, even though it's a nice time he's showing her, instead of cash?"

She thought for a couple of seconds before telling me "I 'spect so."

"So is it really any different, then, if she lets him have sex with her because he did something maybe a little bigger or more important than taking her out for a good time? Is either one of them any different, or has the price just gone up?"

"Same thing, I reckon."

My next question really got her attention: "Now, when Lucy and I first got here with Lisa, would you have let me into your bed, if I'd asked?"

"Hell, no I wouldn't have!"

I gently hugged her to calm her down before asking "Now, what was the difference between then, and this morning?"

Only slightly mollified, she sat back again and considered my question. After a bit, she answered "If I'd gone to bed with you then, I'd have been selling myself, just like if it was for money. This morning, I wanted you because I love you; because of what kind of man you are." - and on the heels of that, looked up at me again to say "You're saying that if Lisa only wanted to go to bed with you because she was grateful for all you've done, you'd turn her down?"

"That's exactly what I'm saying."

"But why?"

"I'll answer your question with my own: would you have any respect for yourself if you were willing to sell yourself to men, whether it was for money or anything else? If you didn't, do you think any man that respected HIMSELF would respect you? Or want to make love with you, when he knew that anybody that could meet your price could have you?"

A few seconds went by before she asked "Does loving folks really make that much of a difference, to you?"

I answered "To me, and to Lucy, too. Do you think you would have enjoyed your time in bed with Bill as much if you hadn't loved him? If it's just the physical part of it, why haven't you been as happy taking care of yourself as when it was you and Bill being together?"

She only lay there, dumbfounded, as she considered what I'd just told her.

Finally, she looked at me in amazement as she said "Lordy, Lordy, Lordy. What kind of folks you and Lucy must be, that you've got the strength inside you to live like that! You've got two girls, too - they think that way?"

"Robyn and Sandra; yes, both of them think that way, too."

I smiled at her, and suggested "There's more to it, too. Think about what Lucy told you that first night, and what she said this morning, and see if you can figure it out."

Sarah snuggled back into my arms to do just as I'd said; several minutes went by before I heard her say "You can be like that because you're so strong inside; and because you ARE so strong - inside, the only place where it really counts - you aren't willing to just watch when you see other folks being done wrong. You don't do it for any reason other than how it makes you feel inside, knowing you done the right thing, for decent folks, for the right reasons."

I gave her a gentle hug, and asked "Now, what does that tell you about what kind of people we are - and more importantly, how we think?"

She glanced up at me, and with a smile told me "I haven't had to study like this since I left High school - and that was some time ago!" before settling into my arms again.

When she spoke to me again, it was to say "It tells me that you trust yourselves - that you aren't afraid to make decisions. And that to make decisions and be confident about them, you must be getting it right a whole lot more than you get wrong. To do that, you must have figured out a way of looking at things that's a whole lot more steady than most folks have."

Saying that, she eased herself out of my arms, and moved over a bit before telling me "Sit up, against the headboard, there. This is some talk we're havin' and I want us to be able to look at each other, and be comfortable doin' it."

I did as she said, and wasn't particularly surprised when she moved to sit astraddle my lap before telling me "I expect you got some more to say - so spit it out."

"Who are your best friends? Not just now, but when you were growing up? WHY are - or were - they your best friends? What is it about them that you like? And why do you think they like YOU?"

She 'zoned out' on me for a bit before telling me "Go on."

I asked her "Is it maybe that you liked them because of what they meant to you? And they meant something to you because of how the two of you treated each other? And that you treated each other the way you did because each of you was getting back from the other as much as you were putting in to the relationship?"

I had her full attention as she commanded "Keep talking."

I continued "What you've been doing has been surprisingly simple, even if you didn't realize you were doing it: deciding for yourself what kind of people you wanted around, and then treating them according to how well they matched what you wanted. The difference between what you've done, and what Lucy, I, our kids, and OUR best friends, is that we've chosen to do that on purpose. We have consciously chosen what kind of people we'd like to have around us. I'll bet that sometimes you started to be good friends with someone, then they said or did something that caused you to stop being friends with them, right?"

Sarah nodded slowly, and I went on "I, and Lucy, and the rest of our family and friends, we don't have that problem. The reason why is that we consciously and deliberately think about what people are doing, and comparing it to what WE want and expect our friends to be like. We're always paying attention to how people behave, and compare it against



the things they SAY; and when those two things aren't the same, we go by someone's ACTIONS - you've heard that actions speak louder than words, right?"

"Sure, it sometimes happens that what someone does isn't the same as what they said - but if the difference is too big, or it happens too often, then it doesn't take long before you know how much you can trust them about different things, does it? So like I said, what we do is just keep paying attention, and watching how well someone matches up with the kind of people we like - and if they don't match up very well, we can either try to teach them how they can be better if they don't know how; or if they don't want to know, we just stop dealing with them."

Sarah asked "But how can you do what you do so good, then?"

"The whole 'trick' is that you have to be as honest and consistent with yourself as you are with other people. The steadier you are about being true to and with yourself, the steadier you are dealing with other people; and the steadier your relationships with them will be.

She looked at me in curiosity before asking "Don't you ever get tempted to give in a little, just to get something you want?"

I laughed, and said "Oh, I don't deny that there's temptations, sometimes - but again, the higher your standards and the more consistently you apply them, the better the results are. Have you ever been on a diet?"

"One or two", she laughed.

I laughed with her, and said "Which ones did you do better on: the ones where you cheated, or the ones where you kept to them?"

The look she gave me was answer enough, and I went on "Now, don't you suppose that if you're the same way about picking what kind of people you want as friends, and who you want close to you, you're going to get the same kind of results? And which is more important, really: losing a few pounds, or the kind of people you have in your life?"

"It's the people, of course", she answered, then asked "Are you telling me that it's really that simple?"

I smiled and answered "Yes, it's really that simple; the idea is, anyway. Of course, sometimes the actual doing of it isn't so easy - but then, nothing worthwhile ever is, is it?"

She smiled back at me before answering me "No, when it gets down to it, nothing really worthwhile is ever easy."

I looked into her eyes as I told her "But I can promise you this much: the longer and steadier you do it, the easier it gets; and the results you get make it all worthwhile."

"Looking at you and Lucy, I reckon it IS worthwhile. But I'm still going to have to think on it some before I expect I'll be able to start doing it."

I reached forward, and Sarah willingly let herself be pulled into my arms for a hug before sitting up again and saying "What we done before felt real good, and this talking with you has given me something to think about - but I've still got a nineteen-year-old daughter coming home before long, and I don't think I'm quite ready to have her find me laying in bed with a man that isn't her daddy. As nice as it feels to be here like this with you, I still think we need to get up and get ourselves ready for when Lucy and Lisa get home."

"Would you like us to clean up together, or take turns?"

Sara hesitated a moment at the question, the grinned and answered "I already found out there's a lot of pleasure me and Bill missed out on, being the way we were. I reckon it's time I found out what else I might have let get by me, too!" - the last with a grin.

When Lisa and Lucy got back a little after 5 o'clock, they found the two of us sitting on the couch, watching the afternoon news. Lisa greeted her mother, and hurried upstairs to change clothes - Lucy had suggested supper 'out' - Lucy stayed behind, taking a chair near us. Sarah noticed Lucy looking at her, and nervously asked "What is it?"

Lucy just asked "Did you have a nice time this afternoon?"

Sarah didn't even hesitate before answering "Dang right!" before blushing slightly.

Lucy just smiled and answered "Good! I expected you would!" - making Sarah's blush darken a bit before she laughed and said "Yeah, I guess you would, at that, wouldn't you?"

A couple of minutes later, Lisa was back downstairs, and the four of us went out to eat at the Sidesaddle. While we were enjoying our brisket, Lucy said "Looks to me like we're getting a fair amount of attention. Is something wrong?"

Sarah gave us a half-smile and answered "I don't think so. I expect that by now, half the county knows what happened last night; and those that don't know yet likely will before they go to bed tonight. It's been some time since Sheriff Purdy has had the kind of trouble YOU two handed him last night, and I wouldn't doubt that there's folks thinking he might have picked the wrong folks to start something with when he run across you two."

We were nearly finished with our meals when a woman stopped by the table to chat a few moments with Sarah - and get introduced to all of us. After she was gone, Sarah looked bemused as she told us "Tillie Howards, there, she's one of the biggest gossips in the county. Her and me, we never got along much. If she's willing to come over to jaw like that, you can bet cash money that she figures the winds are fixing to start blowing from a different direction, what with you all being here. That, and she just had to see for herself the folks that have been giving Purdy such fits!"

All of us laughed briefly before going back to finish our meals - then going on to order hot fudge sundaes for dessert.

We were on our way back to Sarah's house when a car pulled in behind us, followed by the police lights on top of it lighting up a few seconds later. I dutifully pulled over, and was only mildly surprised when Sheriff Purdy was the one to walk up to talk to me. I rolled the window down, and he told me "I heard you was in some trouble up at the Conestoga last night, Mister Andrews."

"I'm sorry to say that's true, Sheriff."

"You wouldn't be looking to start anything down here, now, would you?"

"I wasn't looking to start anything up there, Sheriff. It's just that some people that didn't seem to understand that it just isn't right to bullying people around, I guess, and they had to learn different." - behind me, I heard Sarah's soft snicker as Lisa gasped.

Sheriff Purdy got a little red in the face, but kept his composure and said "Well, I sure hope there isn't any trouble like that down here; if there was, I'd have to go putting people in jail, and all."

"Sheriff, I don't go looking for trouble. But if it comes looking for me, I'm not afraid of it. I've seen too many people that thought they were King Shit of Turd Mountain, and only turned out to be sorry little piss ants that got too big for their britches. When that kind of trouble comes my way, well, let's just say that I can generally see to it that it doesn't go looking for anyone else."

Purdy spluttered for a moment before telling me "Well, I just don't want no trouble in this county, Mister Andrews."

"I can appreciate that, Sheriff - and I guess being in law enforcement and all, you can appreciate that what's trouble for some folks might just look like justice to others."

Purdy got red again, and I could hear the anger in his voice when he told me "I done said what I had to say, Mister Andrews. I reckon you folks can go on about your business, now" before turning and heading back to his vehicle.

When he was gone, Sarah asked me "Was that a good idea, Dan? Egging him on and all, like that?"

I turned around a bit to look at her and grinned as I answered "MAYBE not - but it sure was fun, though!" - making her and the other two laugh.

Other than that, the rest of the evening went by pretty much as usual.

The next morning, Lucy and the others decided that it was time to go Shopping. Not necessarily to buy anything, but all of them conceded the likelihood that they Might Get Something. I'd been around Lucy long enough that I knew the signs: they were more interested in looking at as many things as possible than after anything in particular. None of them seemed surprised - or disappointed - when I indicated that I'd pass on accompanying them in favor of going over the information that had been collected up to that point.

While they were gone, I added the data that Lucy and Lisa had brought back the previous day, then started looking at it. There was something about it that started niggling at the back of my mind, but I couldn't get it to come out where I could look at it. I spent most of the day slowly getting frustrated, until I realized what was happening and put it all aside. I was sitting on the front porch of Sarah's house drinking a beer when the three of them got back from their excursion - and having apparently decided that there WAS something worth buying, after all: each of them had a least a couple of packages, with Lucy giving me a lopsided grin as she tried to handle the several bags she dug out of the trunk of the car.

When they got close, Sarah asked "So how did it go today, Dan?"

"Not as good as I'd hoped", I admitted. That got their attention, and they all hurried to put their things away before getting their own beers and joining me on the porch so I could tell them what I'd been going through before they went on to tell me how much fun they'd had.

When they were done, Lucy told me "While we were shopping, Sarah and Lisa invited me to go horseback riding with them tomorrow. Would you like to join us, and kind of get your mind off things for a while?"

Lisa and Sarah both hastened to assure me that I'd be MORE than welcome, and actually looked a little disappointed when I said that I thought I'd pass - that I thought after a night's sleeping on it, I would be able to find the answer the next day.

Sarah then spoke up to tell us "If you're feeling agreeable, I've got some nice steaks that I think you'd enjoy. I've kind of been hankering to grill something, and this seems like as good a time as any."

Lucy and I assured her that we were all for grilled steaks; smiling, she got up and went inside after telling us "If you'll excuse me for a minute, I'll get things started, then."

After she'd been gone a couple of minutes, Lisa cleared her throat, and when Lucy and I were looking at her, told us "I ain't thanked you proper for what all you've done - not just for me, but for Momma, too. If you'll have me, I'd like to let you know how much I appreciate it by... by keeping you company tonight. I don't want to worry Momma none, so I'd come down to join you after we all went to bed; and I'd have to leave again before Momma gets up in the morning. But I'd be right willing to spend as much time in

between as I could with you. And so you don't think I'm just tryin' to get your man into bed, Lucy, I'll let you know that I'd be right glad to be with you, too, if you folks don't mind. Me and one of my friends, well, we done some fooling around with each other, so I've got some idea of how to make you happy, too. I might not be as good at it as some, but I'll do my best, and I'm willin' to learn if you'll tell me."

The look I got from Lucy let me know that she was going to let me handle this one.

"Lisa, you're a friendly, intelligent, attractive girl, and if I wasn't who I am, I'd jump at the chance to accept what I think you're offering me - us, I mean." Lisa quickly told me "I am offering you what you think - ME." - before I went on to tell her "But it's not my way to be able to accept."

I could see the disappointment and hurt on her face, and hastened to tell her "It's not that I don't think you're pretty - goodness knows, it's not that! You are pretty, very much so. Before you start thinking it, it's not because I think you and Charlie have already been together; that is, because I don't think you're a virgin. Honestly, whether you're a virgin or not doesn't really matter to me. And so you don't have to worry about it, it's not that you've offered to be with Lucy, too - if you've been with another girl and the two of you were doing it because you cared for each other, and you enjoyed yourselves, then all I can say is good for you! What does matter is WHY you said you wanted to be with me: because of what I - and Lucy - have done here. We aren't doing any of this because we want or expect anybody to go to bed with us, or try to find ways to 'repay' us for what we're doing. We're staying here and trying to find a way to deal with Sheriff Purdy because of what kind of person he is, and because he's hurting people that don't deserve it. That's the ONLY reason. I'm flattered - and Lucy is, too, I think - that you would think enough of us that you'd be willing to share yourself with us. Where I - we - have a problem is with WHY you're doing it. Both of us care for you - and your mom - very much, now. We cared what happened to you after that first night we were here; and it's even more, now. We care so much, in fact, that we can't accept your offer, because both of us know that as much as you think it's right, now, you'd realize that it wasn't right, later."

Lisa had settled down a little, and Lucy told her "Lisa, I agree with what Dan just said. He's right - you are friendly and intelligent and most definitely pretty. But I wouldn't feel right about having you join us for the reasons you gave us. I don't doubt for a moment that you're sincere and honest about wanting to be with us; that just makes me love you all the more. But it's BECAUSE I love you that I can't accept. I know it probably hurts to hear this right now, but I think it would hurt you a lot more if you thought about why you went to bed with us later. Please, stop and think about what you're doing, and most important, WHY."

Lisa sniffled a little bit, but managed to not start crying, and told us "Yes, Lucy, it DOES hurt. But I am going to think about it - I don't understand how or why you would say no to something that I would have thought would be so easy for you."

I took Lisa's hand and held it as I told her "But that's the problem, Lisa. Because of who and what we are, it wouldn't be easy for us to do that."

Looking at me as though I'd just spoken Swahili to her, Lisa held her peace for a bit before asking us "Would you be kind enough to do me the favor of not telling Momma about this? There's no need to embarrass her."

I'd already told Lucy that Sarah had warned me this might happen, so it wasn't any problem for both of us to assure her that we wouldn't say a word. Her relief was clear on her face when she stood up and asked us to excuse her for a bit.

She'd only been gone a few minutes when Sarah came back out on the porch, announcing that she'd started the potatoes cooking, and had gotten the grill started. Noticing that Lisa was gone, Sarah asked where she'd gotten off to. Lucy and I just told her that Lisa had said she needed to go upstairs for a bit before supper. Sarah looked a little mystified, but let it go so she could start telling Lucy what she could expect the next day: Lucy had never ridden a horse before in her life, and had absolutely no idea of what was going to happen.

Several minutes later, Lisa rejoined us looking none the worse, and quickly joined in with her mother to prepare Lucy for her first ever adventure in horseback riding.

A while later, it was time for supper - during which Lisa and Sarah took turns teasing Lucy by telling her about all the various 'adventures' they'd had while riding horses.

After they'd left the next morning - Lucy looking delightful in the Western wear they'd helped her select - I was back out in the Monster trying to see if I couldn't figure out what was going on with Sheriff Purdy. It was after I'd microwaved a little bit of late lunch and was sitting on the porch eating it and washing it down with cold beer that I finally got hold of one edge of what had been hiding in the back of my mind since the previous day. I quickly finished my 'meal', and went back to the computer to start checking things. I was nearly finished when I heard the car pull into the driveway. Lucy came in to see how I was doing, and when she saw the look of concentration on my face, beat a hasty retreat. I'd never, ever gotten upset with her or the girls when they'd accidentally broken a train of thought - but all of them loved me so much that they would sometimes go to extremes to avoid the risk of doing so. I'd once been working to meet a changed deadline when Robyn had sprained an ankle during Gym class at school. They'd brought her home, and she'd waited in her bedroom for me, rather than come out and interrupt what I was doing. I'd had to explain to her that she was infinitely more important to me than the relatively small amount of money I got from programming - that if she was EVER hurt or needed to talk to me about ANYTHING, I fully expected to hear from her, no matter what.

When I went inside, Sarah took one look at me and said "I'll get you something to drink..." as Lucy got up to guide me over to a chair. When I was sitting down, she moved behind me and was massaging my shoulders when Sarah reappeared with a glass of dark

liquid, which she handed to me. I cautiously took a sip, and discovered that she'd made me a rum-and-coke - a strong one.

Sarah sat down again before asking me "How did it go today, Dan?"

I took another sip of the drink she'd made and opened my eyes and looked over at her before answering "I've got it - at least, part of it. Sheriff Purdy is definitely up to something."

Lisa exclaimed "Hell, we knew that!" before Sarah shushed her.

I turned my head to look at her before saying "There's a difference between knowing something in your mind, and being able to PROVE it. I'm starting to get the proof together - the kind of proof that real law enforcement can use" - causing her to blush furiously before quietly telling me "I'm sorry, Dan."

Sarah asked me what I'd found, and I went on to explain it to her: that I'd finally found what looked like a pattern to Purdy's activities, and that it was clear that he was up to something. I went on to add "I don't know, YET, exactly what it is. But I know there's SOMETHING there. Now it's just a question of finding out WHAT. Oh, and by the way, I've also figured out - with proof" - the last directed toward Lisa; she HAD annoyed me with her outburst - "that Old Man Purdy pulled some real fast ones in the process of buying up and owning this county. I'm not sure if it's all strictly legal - you'd have to see a lawyer about that, but you'd likely want to see a lawyer anyway; it looks to me like a lot of what he's done would open him up to civil suits, if the law doesn't go after him."

Sarah got a look of amazement on her face as she told me "You did that? You got PROOF?"

"Yeah. It's out there on the computer."

"Do you have any idea how many people have tried to get something on him? How many people have tried to even FIND what he did, never mind be able to do anything with it?" Sarah demanded.

I just gave her a wicked grin before answering "I don't doubt that they did - but I had a couple of advantages that they likely didn't."

Sarah couldn't help but ask "And what are those?"

I laughed and said "First was Lucy - anybody that can make sense out of some of the financial statements and records that I've seen her deal with can chase down a fact that doesn't want to be found. The other is that I wasn't limited to just the records here in the county; I got some friends I know to do a little digging, too, and the information they came up with filled in the missing pieces." Lucy leaned over to give me an upside-down

kiss in return for the praise I'd given her; she already knew that I respected what she did, and how she did it.

Lisa asked "So we can call the law in, now?"

I told her "No, not yet. All that's happened so far as that I've taken a bunch of small pieces to a puzzle and fit them together to make a bigger piece. Now that I've got that bigger piece, I can start looking for more pieces until I have enough to figure out what the picture is. THEN it can go to the law. Basically, we've peeled back one layer, and discovered we've got an onion. What we do now is start peeling the rest of the layers off until we get to what's inside."

Sarah and Lucy both nodded their understanding before Sarah said "I don't know about the 'we' part of that, though. I kinda suspect that you're the one going to be doing most of the work on this!"

I hastened to assure her "Okay, I'm the one doing the computer work, and fitting some of this together. But I'm not doing it alone - ALL of you are helping, in one way or another."

"How so?" Lisa asked.

"When you go with Lucy and help her, what do you do?" I asked her.

"Mostly, I've just gone and found papers and such that she's asked for. Not all of them have been easy to find, though."

"So what you've done is saved Lucy the time of doing that herself. Do you think she could have found those things by herself?"

"Of course she could."

"With it being your library and county courthouse and all, you think you maybe found things faster than she could have?"

"Probably."

"So you saved her some time, then. Time she used doing what SHE's best at: figuring out what else she needed to look at, instead of hunting down exactly where a particular piece of paper was. You figure that helped her, and made all of this happen a little faster?"

Lisa nodded her understanding, looking a little pleased to realize that she HAD been more of a help than she'd apparently thought.

I turned my attention to Sarah next and said "And you've helped, too. You've given Lucy and me information that Lisa obviously couldn't know because she hasn't lived here as long as you have. Some of what you've told us has given us hints and ideas and



suggestions about what kinds of things to look for, and where to start looking for them. And if you think about it, you've given us even more direct support by giving us a place to stay, feeding us, and just showing us the reason WHY we're doing what we are."

I went on to tell them "I read a book by a man that had been in the military, and he'd written that when he was commanding a base up in Greenland, he'd started a policy of emphasizing that everyone contributed to whatever missions they had by showing that all the people there added something to it - from the people that actually performed the final work, through the men that did the maintenance on all the equipment, and all the way down to the lowest enlisted man that cleaned the bathrooms."

Sarah smiled and said "I've got to know - how did a clean bathroom help?"

I grinned and asked "If you were about to go out on a mission where you might get hurt, wouldn't you appreciate it if the bathroom you used before you left was clean and orderly?" - followed by her soft laugh, and a nod.

"So what happens now?" I heard Lucy ask above/behind me.

I answered "Now we start looking for the rest of the pieces to the puzzle. Tomorrow, I go see Sheriff Babcock, and see if I can't get some of them from him."

"You really think he'd help, after what happened the other night?" Sarah asked.

"I think he might, after he hears what I've got to tell him. I got the distinct impression that it wouldn't hurt his feelings any if Purdy finally got nailed for whatever it is that he's up to."

Sarah smiled, then told us "I hope so." before saying "I trust you'll excuse me if supper is a bit late; I was waiting until all of us were here before I started. Lucy told me you were real busy out there, and I didn't know when you'd be done, so I just waited after Lucy and Lisa told me they weren't in any hurry, either."

I grinned and said "Well, since I was the reason supper's late, how about if I spring for pizza so you don't have to cook at ALL?"

Sarah laughed and said "I reckon I could live with that!"

They only had one pizza place in town, so there wasn't any need for a lot of discussion about where to get it from; the toppings were settled on in short order, and Lisa went to call in the order after Lucy said she'd go get it. When the time came, Lucy followed Sarah's careful directions, and was soon back with it; the four of us enjoyed it as we watched some comedies on TV before we went to bed.

The next morning, I called Sheriff Babcock's office, and soon had an appointment to see him that afternoon. When I got there, I was surprised when he stood up after I went into his office and offered me his hand to shake.

Seeing the surprise on my face, he explained "After what happened the other night, I took the time to find out a little about you, Mister Andrews, and I was some surprised at what I learned. I'm right glad, now, that I didn't haul you in like I was first tempted to. Not because of all the information that come back when I put your name on the wire, but what I found out about you through some friends in Boise. The little bit they could tell me about your Army record was right impressive. I was in the Marines, myself, so I got some idea of what it took to get the medals you did. Now, what is it that brings you up here for a visit?"

"I was hoping that I could ask for a little help, Sheriff."

He looked at me for a couple of seconds, then said "You couldn't have known that I'd asked about you before now, so what is it that made you think you could ask me for a favor, after the other night?"

I told him "I've finally been able to put together some information that proves Sheriff Purdy is up to no good. I was hoping that after I'd had a chance to tell you what it was, you'd be agreeable to hearing what I'm after."

"Okay, you've got my attention. What's this proof you say you have about Purdy being up to something?"

I spent the next several minutes explaining to him what we'd found, and how I thought it all fit together. I'd brought along some printouts of some of it, and showed them to him, as well. When I was done, he sat back in his chair and thought about what I'd just been telling him. After a bit, he sat up again, and told me "It sure looks like you're right about there being something there, but you admit that you don't know what that something is."

"That's why I'm here, Sheriff. I'm positive that the information I need is in official records - but they're the kind of records that a civilian ordinarily couldn't get to. What I came up here to ask is if you would be willing to get me copies of those records so I can try to find what I'm after."

He looked at me appraisingly before saying "What is it you're after, and what are you going to do with it?"

"What I'm after is records of criminal activity - not WHO did something, just that they did it. What I'm going to do is go through it and see if there's any of it that fits in with what I already know. If it's any help, I'll be more than happy to either return the information or destroy it, when I'm done."

He sighed, and said "That could be a pretty fair number of records. Just what is it you're looking for?"

"That's the problem, Sheriff: if I knew what I was looking for, I wouldn't have to ask for so much."

He nodded, then asked "And if what you're hoping to find isn't there?"

"I'm positive it has to be. Whatever Purdy is up to, it can't be legal; and if it isn't legal, then it's GOT to show up in the records of ILLEGAL activity. It's just a question of my finding it."

Sheriff Babcock snorted and said "'Just' a matter of finding it!" before thinking for a few seconds and telling me "Okay, you've convinced me you know what you're doing. And what you're asking isn't really all that much - not if you're right, and I think you are. Would a year's worth of records for the whole state, down to city level, be enough?"

Amazed, I told him "It would be great, Sheriff. That's a lot more than I'd have hoped for."

He picked up his phone, punched a button, and a few seconds later said "Paula? I need you to make copies of those disks we get from Boise each month, the last year's worth. You got enough disks? You do? Good. I'll get you another package on the way home, tonight, so you don't run out. It's kind of important, so sooner is better. How soon can you have them done? That fast? You're my girl, Paula! Okay, Dan Andrews - yeah, him - will be in to pick them up. Yeah, it looks like he's on to whatever the hell it is that Purdy's been doing - but you never heard that, right? Thatta girl. Listen, I've got one for you -" followed by an improbable off-color joke, ending in a loud laugh, then "Anyway, thanks, Paula" before he hung up again.

Looking at me again, he said "If you'll come back right after lunch tomorrow, Paula will have copies of the statistics we get each month from Boise. It's the whole state, broken up by geographic area and type of crime. It's funny how the amount of crime follows how the economy is doing; and how the types of crimes kind of bunch up according to how big a town is, and where they are. For example, when things are tight, we see a lot more cattle rustling than when things are good; the bigger cities, they don't have that problem - they get more robberies, which are kind of rare around here. That, and there's kind of a time lag between when a big city starts having some kind of problem, and when it shows up in smaller towns; you could almost set your watch by it according to how many people you've got. Anyway, there's two CD's for each month; so make sure you've got a box or something to carry them in."

I could only sit there, stunned, for a few seconds before telling him "I can't thank you enough, Sheriff. I know that blank CDs aren't cheap; can I at least pay for them, or buy you some replacements?"

He thought it over for a bit, then answered "No, I reckon not - you go doing that, and there's all KINDS of paperwork involved in me getting something from a civilian. Way I figure it, what you did the other night, taking ol' Leroy out and giving us those other two; well, you saved me and my deputies a fair amount of time and trouble, answering calls those boys would have caused us, and the expense of chasing them around until we caught them. I got a little 'play' in my budget, so we'll just call it good and be done with it." A moment later, he smiled and said "Now, Paula, there - you might want to be letting her know you appreciate it, though; she's the one doing the work."

I grinned and said "I'd be doing that anyway, Sheriff."

He laughed, and said "I figured. There anything else I can do for you today, Mister Andrews?"

"Sheriff, you've done MORE than enough, and I surely do appreciate it. I don't know how I can begin to thank you."

"If this helps you find out what's going on down there and you're able to make law enforcement mean something, that'll be thanks enough, I reckon." he told me.

Telling him I didn't want to take up too much of his day, I thanked him again for his time and help before standing up and making my way out.

Back at Sarah's house, Lucy and the others were as amazed as I'd been when I told them how it had gone.

The next day, as instructed, I was walking into the Sheriff's office right after lunch. Paula had the disks ready for me, and was delighted with the single rose in a crystal vase I'd brought her - and nearly swooned when I took her hand and kissed it in front of the other ladies she worked with, before thanking her as sincerely as I could.

When I was back in the Monster and loading the data into my laptop, I was impressed with the breadth and depth of the information that was collected and distributed - and doubly grateful to Sheriff Babcock for sharing it with me.

For the next three days, I went over that data with a fine-toothed comb, looking for something - anything! - the bore some kind of relationship to what I already 'knew' about Sheriff Purdy. I went through it forward, backward, upside-down, and sideways. Even then, I damn near missed it.

It was after Lucy and I had gone to bed one night, and I was lying there sound asleep when I suddenly woke up knowing that I'd seen something in some of the data I'd looked

at that day - but not what, or where. I scribbled a note to myself without waking Lucy up, and eventually managed to get back to sleep. The next morning, everyone 'understood' when I was in a little bit of a hurry to get back to it. It was mid-afternoon when I finally recognized what it was that had brought me awake the previous night; it took little more than an hour to confirm it and get it all straightened out once I was on the right track. Following that, I sent emails off to a few people that I knew from my days at college, explaining what I was after, and why. With that done, there wasn't anything left for me to do until I heard back from them. That night, after we'd gone back out to the Monster, I told Lucy what I'd found; I deliberately avoided telling Sarah or Lisa because I was afraid of what they'd do if they knew.

Another full day passed before I heard back from the people I'd emailed; each of them provided a bit of the information I'd asked for - and together, it not only confirmed what I'd expected, but gave me the proof I needed to be able to hand the whole thing off to the proper authorities.

The morning following that, I again called Sheriff Babcock's office and made an appointment to see him - this time for as soon as it could be arranged. Ten thirty found me sitting in his office as he looked at me with considerable curiosity and interest.

"I appreciate you seeing me again, Sheriff - particularly so quickly, and on such short notice." I told him.

"And what is it that I'm seeing you about, Mister Andrews?"

Taking a deep breath, I answered "You're seeing me about what needs to happen to catch and prosecute Sheriff Purdy and his deputy for kidnapping runaway girls, breaking them emotionally and mentally, and selling them to people."

Babcock suddenly sat up in his chair and demanded "What did you just say?!"

"I said that Purdy and Luther have been kidnapping girls, breaking them down - think of it as brainwashing - and selling them."

"That's a pretty serious charge, Mister Anderson. I hoping you've got some kind of proof?"

I nodded, and told him "It took some doing, but yes, I do."

"Lay it out for me, then."

So I did: how I'd damn near missed the statistic that had haunted me, finally recognized it, and gotten some friends to do a little digging for me - only to find out that there WAS a close, but extremely lucrative, underground trade in young girls for the purpose of becoming domestic and sexual slaves. To that I added that it hadn't taken long for those same friends to verify that 'somebody' had appeared on the scene a few years prior, and

started providing high-quality, well-trained, and extremely compliant girls. Then I went on to show him that the even though the rate of runaway girls had remained fairly constant over that period, there had been a slight - but measurable - decrease in the number of such girls around the state for the same period. Finally, I was able to show him that Sheriff Purdy had been making large deposits into a bank account in a Caribbean country; deposits that well exceeded his known salary and other income; to that, I showed proof that Luther had been living well above his means as Deputy: on an income of some thirty thousand dollars a year, he had built a quarter-million-dollar home, owned not one but TWO boats that each cost more than his annual salary, and three luxury cars - despite having no demonstrable outside investments or other income. As I covered each point, I showed him evidence of what I was talking about by putting hardcopies of the evidence I had on his desk.

I finished up by telling him "As near as I can figure, Purdy has been going to the different larger cities and towns and using his patrol vehicle to 'pull in' just one or two girls a month. Then he apparently takes them back to HIS county and tucks them away someplace he's set up so that he and Luther can go about breaking them down and getting them ready to be sold. I don't doubt that every so often, he gets one that simply won't break; instead of fussing with her, he and the deputy just kill her - as an example to the others, and to save the bother of fussing with her too much - and go get another one. It was when they were killing one of them by beating her to death that a couple of kids - a boy and his girlfriend - saw them. Purdy didn't want to have to shut down his operation because he was making too much money with it, so he tried to just intimidate the kids that saw him, when he learned what they'd seen and who they were. It was when he thought one of them might get out of his range that he grabbed the young man. I don't know if Purdy killed him, or is breaking him down for sale - there is some call for boys, by the way - but the kid hasn't been seen for weeks. The girl tried to hide from him by taking off for points west when he caught up with her. If my wife and I hadn't been the ones that picked her up hitchhiking, she likely would have disappeared, too."

Sheriff Babcock could only sit there in amazement as he said "I'll be God-damn. Any town of any size, ain't nobody going to take notice if there's one runaway girl missing; hell, they'd like as not figure she just decided to move on after being hassled too much, or something!"

"Now, Sheriff, MY question is: who does this information go to, and how does it get to them? I want to see Purdy go to jail, but I don't want to step on anyone's toes getting him there."

Babcock didn't even hesitate; he just picked up his phone, punched a button, and told the person that answered "Dorothy? Get me Colonel Wilson at the State Police, would you? I need to talk to him right now."

He held the phone to his ear as he looked at me and muttered "God-damn Purdy! I got daughters, that son of a bitch! I get my hands on him and Luther, I'll..."

He was interrupted by what must have been the Colonel on the phone, because he promptly switched over to telling them "Bob? Sheriff Babcock here, over in Raintree County. I got a fella sitting here in my office that's just showed me some things that are right interesting. He's done proved to me that Sheriff Purdy - yeah, that ass-hat - has been kidnapping girls and selling them as slaves. I know, I didn't hardly believe it, either - but he's got the evidence; it's right here on my desk. No, it ain't just a bunch of stories strung together to sound good; he's got hard evidence, and the explanation he give me makes perfect sense. You will? I'm damn glad to hear that, Bob - this ain't something I'd want to take on by my lonesome. I expect this is going to be involving the FBI, too, so you might want to give them a heads-up, too. Yeah, I will. He'll be here when you get here. Thanks, Bob - I'll see you soon."

Turning back to me, Sheriff Babcock told me "That was the head of the State Police barracks, next county over. He'll be here in 'bout twenty minutes; he's going to want to have a look at all this before he does anything big - but he's already put out a call for some state troopers to start heading this way." Embarrassed, Babcock told me "He told me to make sure you didn't go anywhere - said he wanted to see it for himself, and make sure you weren't some nutcase."

I grinned, and said "I'm not denying that I might be a nutcase - but whether or not I am, Purdy's still selling girls as slaves." - something that both amused and angered Babcock.

As promised, it wasn't twenty minutes later before what could only have been Colonel Wilson came into the Sheriff's office. He took one look at me and asked "You the fella that started all this?"

I looked him in the eye and answered "No, that would have been Sheriff Purdy. I'm the guy that found the evidence to prove it."

The Colonel started to get upset before Sheriff Babcock interrupted to tell him "Before you go saying anything you might regret, Bob, you might want to hear a little about Mister Andrews, here -", and proceeded to relay some of the information he'd gotten about me, including my military service, and that I'd already helped the FBI on a couple of occasions.

Finding out that I wasn't a 'nutcase', the Colonel seemed a lot more willing to hear the story - and by the time Babcock and I were done telling it, and showing him the evidence, he was convinced, too. He pulled out the microphone for his walkie-talkie, and said "This is Colonel Wilson. I want those cars I alerted, and twelve more, to meet me at the Oak Tree county courthouse. I'll be there in fifteen minutes. Get them rolling."

Turning to me, Wilson said "You're riding with me", then told Sheriff Babcock "Think that crate you got can keep up, George?"

Babcock simply told him "Don't flinch, Bob, or you'll be lookin' at MY taillights!"

Out in the parking lot, Wilson indicated that I should take a seat up front, with him; it wasn't a minute later that we, and Sheriff Babcock, were passing through sixty miles an hour on the way out of town.

By my watch, we pulled up in front of the county courthouse twelve minutes later - next to two other State Police cars.

Inside, the secretary was explaining to one of the troopers that she didn't know where Sheriff Purdy had gone off to - only that he and the deputy had left in a hurry a good ten minutes ago.

A sense of dread took me over, and I told Wilson and Babcock "We need to check on my wife and a couple of other people - the girl that saw Purdy kill that girl, and her mother."

Babcock told Colonel Wilson "I'll take him so you can stay here and get things going."; Wilson nodded, and Sheriff Babcock and I hurried out to his car. It wasn't two minutes before we were pulling up in front of Sarah's house - and could see that there had been trouble: there were tire tracks on her lawn, and the front door was wide open. We got out of the car, and I ran into the house calling for Lucy, knowing deep inside that I wasn't going to get a reply, and terrified at the thought.

It took us only a minute to verify that there wasn't anyone inside the house; my next stop was the Monster. Opening the door, I could see that no one was in it, but I called out just in case - and was surprised to hear a muffled cry as someone called out my name. I headed toward the back of the Monster where the bedroom was, and was surprised to see Lisa crawling out from under the bed, where she'd obviously been hiding in one of the little spaces my friend had added. Disheveled and obviously frightened, Lisa still managed to pull herself together long enough to tell us what had happened.

No more than five minutes earlier, Sheriff Purdy and Luther had pulled up in their patrol vehicles; Luther had parked at the curb, but Purdy had come clear onto the lawn. Sarah and Lucy had both seen them arrive, and it had been Lucy that had told Lisa to go out the back and wait at the side of the house until she could get into the Monster without being seen. Lucy had also told her where to hide, and how to open up the little compartment that was all but undetectable. As she was moving toward the back of the house, Lisa had heard Lucy and Sarah agreeing on what to tell Purdy about why she wasn't there.

No more than a minute after she'd pulled the opening to her hideaway shut, Lisa had heard someone - Luther, she thought - come inside and quickly search for her. He'd knocked on the base of the bed, but apparently been convinced that it didn't offer anyplace someone could hide, and left. She'd been afraid to do or say anything, and had stayed hidden until she heard me call out.

I told her "Lisa, we need to know where it was that you and Charlie saw them beat that girl."



She started to tell us, and Babcock interrupted to tell her "I don't think either one of us knows where you're talking about. Come with us, and show us on a map."

Lisa nodded, and I put my arm around her as the three of us headed back for Sheriff Babcock's vehicle. I stayed in the back seat with her, trying to get her settled down as we headed back for the county courthouse. Once there, Babcock quickly let us out, and led the way over to where Colonel Wilson was directing the activities of his troopers, a map spread out on the hood of his car. Seeing us, he asked "Where're the others? And who's she?"

Babcock quickly filled him in, and Wilson's face got visibly taut as he muttered something about Purdy's parentage before he asked Lisa "Can you show us on the map where it was you saw Purdy?"

Lisa went over to it, and looked it over for a minute or so before pointing to a spot and saying "Right about there - where Lane Deer Creek makes that sudden turn south. Might be a little north, but not but about fifty yards, or so."

Babcock looked at the map, too, and said "Okay, I know that spot - used to do a bit of fishing there, when I was younger."

"Let's go, then", I told him.

He turned to look at me, and asked "What do you mean 'let's' go?"

I just looked him in the eye and levelly told him "That's my wife he's got. And that girl's mother. If you think you're going after that assmunch without me, you're full of shit."

"And what makes you think there's anything you can do?"

"A Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and some other jewelry Uncle Sugar gave me back in my Army days" I answered.

"You think you can still do it?" he asked.

"After what happened at the Conestoga, YOU tell ME. If I can't, leave me behind."

He blinked at me a couple times, then said "Okay, let's go."

We'd just gotten into his car when I told him "We need to stop off at the house, again."

"Why?"

"I ain't dressed for playing in the woods."

"Gonna cost us some time" he warned me as he made the turn toward Sarah's house.

"Not enough to matter" I replied, adding "If I'm not out in ninety seconds, leave me."

He looked at me, but nodded as he pulled up in front of Sarah's. I was out the door and moving before the vehicle stopped rocking. Inside, I changed clothes, and got something out of another of the hidden cubbyholes; I was on the way back to the Sheriff's car in less than a minute twenty. When he saw what I was carrying, Sheriff Babcock asked me "What the hell is that for?" as he put it in drive and hit the gas.

"What the hell you THINK it's for? It's in case I gotta shoot somebody", I answered.

He gave me a sideways glance before asking "And if they're too close?"

His question was answered when I pulled out my .45 and checked it. He didn't have any more questions after that.

Several minutes later, we pulled into a small parking area where we saw two Oak County patrol vehicles - the Sheriff's, and one Deputy. We just looked at each other before heading over to where a small path headed into the woods.

We'd been following it for just a couple of minutes when I suddenly told him to stop; the tone of my voice told him to do it RIGHT NOW. I moved up next to him, and pointed at the trail; it took him a couple of seconds to see the thin monofilament fishing line strung across the trail. He took and released a deep breath before telling me "Thanks. I don't know what that's hooked to, but I don't think it's good."

I knelt down, and carefully followed it to one end, where it was fastened to a tree. Following it the other way, I saw that it was hooked to the detonator for a jury-rigged Claymore: a couple sticks of dynamite held in place by a bag of shotgun shot. I carefully disarmed it, then cut the line; when he saw it go slack, Babcock came over to where I was and looked at what I'd found. Shaking his head, he just muttered "Nope, not good, at all."

I stood up, and the two of us headed up the trail again. Maybe a half hour later, we came on a clearing; looking around, we could see a number of primitive huts. We were looking things over when we heard a gunshot from one of them; both of us quickly, but quietly, made our way to it. Using hand signals we worked out what we were going to do next; I got ready, and when he signaled, opened the door for him. Sheriff Babcock swung around to aim his weapon at whoever was armed inside. I heard him yell "Freeze, Luther!", and watched as he took a step in and to the side. I quickly moved to join him, and saw that Luther had already killed the three 'regular' occupants of the hut, and was apparently getting ready to kill Sarah. When he saw me come in, he paled, and suddenly moved to aim his pistol at her head before telling us "I ain't going to prison. I know what cons do to cops, inside. Either you let me go, or I kill the bitch."

Babcock started to say something, but I beat him to it, telling Luther "Luther, you're fucking up. You shoot her, you've got no hostages left - you've done killed the others.

Now here's how this is going to play out: either you put the gun down and give up, or I'm going to put a bullet in you. I'm rated Expert in the Army Special Forces, so I can hit you anywhere I want to - even your tiny little dick." Having said that, I let him see me lower my aim to somewhere south of his belt buckle; Babcock held steady on his body. Then I told him "Luther, I got better things to do than stand here fucking around with you; both of us know that Purdy's got my wife, and I want to move on so I can scrag his worthless ass. So I'm going to give you a five count before I just shoot you and be on my way; if I don't kill you, maybe the Sheriff here can keep you from bleeding to death."

I waited a moment, then started counting: "Five... Four... Three..." when Luther suddenly said "Okay, I give up!" before letting his pistol drop. It was good thing; I was going to shoot him at 'two'...

Sheriff Babcock quickly moved forward to turn Luther around and face him toward the wall before pushing him into a leaning position and saying "I reckon you know how this goes, Luther-"

Sarah nearly collapsed, but got herself back together and come over to tell me "You're right - Purdy has Lucy, and they went on up the trail on the other side of the clearing. Luther told me that the other buildings have girls in them, too."

"Is Lucy okay?"

"She still was last time I saw her."

Babcock had cuffed Luther by that time, and pushed him out the door with Sarah and I following. Leading Luther over to a tree at the edge of the clearing, Babcock got Luther seated at the base of it through the simple expedient of kicking his feet out from under him before using another pair of cuffs to handcuff him to a large branch. Then he reached into his pocket and pulled out a snub-nosed revolver which he handed it to Sarah, telling her "I'm going with Mister Andrews. You watch Luther here, and if he gets too frisky, just shoot him in the leg or something. Try not to kill him, though, okay? There's too much paperwork in this job, already."

Sarah just gave Luther an evil grin and answered "Okay, I'll try not to kill him. What about the other girls?"

Babcock thought that one over, and finally said "Okay, we'll watch Luther while you get one free; then let her get the others loose while you keep an eye on him."

I managed to control myself while Sarah got a ring of keys from Luther's belt and went into one of the buildings and unshackled one of the people inside. She was out a few moments later, and hurried over to where Sheriff Babcock and I were waiting. The revolver in her hand again, and definitely aimed at Luther, she told us "Charlie was in that building I was just in - it looks like he's been drugged, so I don't know what to do

with him. Otherwise, things are going okay. Now, you two go on and get Lucy back from that bastard!"

She didn't have to tell me twice; I was fifty feet ahead of Babcock before we even got to the trail. Ten minutes later, I stopped again; when Babcock moved next to me, I pointed at the trail again; it didn't take him as long to spot the tripwire that time. I looked around, and saw what Purdy had rigged up. Using my finger to point, I showed Babcock the tree that was bent nearly in half, with a cluster of shrubbery hiding it's branches. Looking closely, you could see that they were hiding a large number of sharpened stakes that had obviously been fastened to the tree; anyone that broke the tripline was going to be turned into multiple orders of shish-kebab.

Sheriff Babcock shuddered, and told me "Okay, I'm convinced - you have most definitely still got it."

I checked the tripwire, and saw that it could be cut without activating the trap. A couple of seconds later, we were on the trail again.

Another half hour, and we started to come up on another clearing - where we could hear voices. Carefully, we moved off the trail and to the edge of the open area. There I could see Purdy and Lucy; I watched as he backhanded her before hearing him tell her that if she didn't quite fucking around, he was going to shoot her in the tit and leave her behind. Lucy just reared back and spit in his face; when he brought his gun up, I yelled out "Don't do it, asshole!"

Purdy turned toward me, and I saw him start to swing his arm around to shoot at me; I took aim with the M-1 Garand I'd brought along, and somehow managed to shoot him in the leg, instead of in the guts as I wanted to. He went down screaming, and Sheriff Babcock was the first one to him, kicking Purdy's pistol out of reach before rolling him over and cuffing his hands behind his back. I was busy with Lucy, of course, and I'd finished checking to make sure she was all right - other than it being obvious that that hadn't been the first time Purdy had hit her - before the two of us turned to watch Babcock start treating the wound I'd put in Purdy's leg. Once he'd gotten the bleeding stopped, he pulled a small radio from his belt and was soon talking to Colonel Wilson, telling him where we were - and where Luther and the camp was. Lucy and I both listened as Wilson promised a dozen troopers would be with us in less than an hour.

In the days that followed, Lucy and I learned that Purdy had been monitoring the State Police radio frequencies with a scanner - and when he heard the Colonel call for all the cars to show up at the courthouse, he'd known the deal was finished. Angry - and most of all, scared - he and Luther had decided to grab Sarah and Lucy (and Lisa, if they'd been able) as 'insurance' in case they were caught. Purdy had wanted them to just get away; it

had been Luther that had decided not to leave any witnesses behind; delaying in their 'training facility' to kill the girls that they had 'in stock'.

Purdy had known to monitor the State Police radio because his father - well into his eighties - had been keeping track of the documents that Lucy had been researching, and knew that his little empire was in trouble. He hadn't known about his sons slave operation, though, and had grossly misjudged how hard and how fast the law would respond. All of the girls that they'd found alive had been identified, and nearly all had cheerfully gone home - many of them had become disillusioned with life on the streets well before Purdy and Luther got hold of them. The few that didn't want to go home - invariably for good reason, as it turned out - were to be given extensive counseling and rehabilitation so they could find regular jobs and become legally self-supporting.

It was nearly a week later and nearly all of the state and local people were done with us when Sarah came out onto her front porch where Lucy and I were sitting one morning. Taking a seat next to us, she told us "Lucy, Dan - I know I've said this before, but I want to say it again: thank you. There aren't words enough to express it, but me and Lisa and even Charlie, we all know how much you've done for us, and how much it's cost you. Not just in money, but in time and trouble and missing out on the fun you'd likely have had if you hadn't interrupted your vacation to help us out."

She hesitated a bit, then went on to say "Dan, I've been thinking a lot about what you and I talked about that afternoon - when you showed me what loving somebody really means. Lisa told me that she told you she wanted to share your bed, and that you told her no, and why. When she told me about it, I really began to understand what you meant about having principles, and living up to them so you'd be able to keep the good people you found around you. What I'm trying to say, and not doing it very good, is say that I'd like to be one of those people, too. And if you're still agreeable, Lucy, I reckon I'm willing to have a try at seeing if I can find love with another woman, too. Of course, you're welcome, too, Dan, if that's what Lucy wants."

Lucy leaned over to take Sarah's hand and said "Thank you, Sarah."

Confused, Sarah asked "What on earth are you thanking ME for?"

Lucy smiled at her and said "I'm thanking you for all the good things you found inside yourself when you started thinking about what Dan told you. The courage, the loving, and all the rest. I know that you're probably still a bit nervous about making love with me - but you're showing me your courage by telling me that you're at least willing to TRY it. And you're telling me that you love me by being willing to share yourself, and your love, with me."

Sarah sat there a little stunned for a few moments before she answered "I reckon I should have known you'd understand what I was doing, and why. Yes, I'm still nervous - more than just a bit! - but I do love you - both of you! - and I want to find out if I can share my love with another woman. Lisa told me this morning that Charlie's done asked her to

marry him, and she's said yes. From tonight on, she's going to be staying over at his place, so we don't have to be worrying about being interrupted."

Lucy looked at me, silently asking if I wanted to join them; I gave her a miniscule shake of my head to let her know that the time they had together was for the two of them alone. She smiled to tell me 'thank you'.

Looking at Sarah again, Lucy said "You had time to get yourself ready before you were with Dan. Would you like to get ready for me, too?"

Visibly nervous then, Sarah answered "If you don't mind."

"Of course not!" Lucy answered, before asking "Is there any particular time that you'd like?"

Marginally more confident, Sarah answered "How about after lunch? That way, you and me, we've got as much time as Dan and I did."

"I think that would be perfect," Lucy assured her.

Sarah continued to stay with us, letting Lucy and I draw her into conversation until I said "I'm starting to feel a little hungry. Sarah, would you mind if Lucy and I went out to eat by ourselves today?"

Visibly relieved, Sarah assured us that she didn't mind at all; a few minutes later, Lucy and I excused ourselves to head for the Roundup for lunch. Lucy ordered the brisket, but ate only a quarter of it before asking them for a box to take it home in. I went with the burger, and managed to finish it AND my fries. Back at the Monster, Lucy and I shared a kiss before she went into the little bathroom and took a quick shower. When she was done, I did my part by helping her dry off, and making sure her clothing fit - checking the cups of her bra, for example, and smoothing the material across the ass of her panties. When she was ready, Lucy calmly left to help Sarah learn that it IS possible for two women to love each other, and show it. Only after we'd gotten home did Lucy tell me how it had gone, both from what she'd experienced herself, and what Sarah had told her after the fact:

When she went inside the house, Lucy saw that Sarah had showered and changed clothing, too. Looking nervous, Sarah told Lucy that she looked nice. Lucy responded by returning the compliment before going over and giving Sarah a hug - then a kiss, soft and gentle, full on the mouth. When it was over, Lucy told her "Sarah, you don't have to be afraid or nervous. I know you've never done this before, and I'm not going to be upset

with you about anything. I had a first time, too, and I know EXACTLY what you're going through. So I'm going to tell you what I think about all this."

Sarah paid close attention as Lucy told her "What I think is that you're a very lovely person. Not just on the outside, which you are; but more importantly, on the inside. I think that I love you, and that you love me. I think that you're a very brave, very honest person because you told me and Dan what you wanted to do, and why you wanted to do it. I think that if you'll let yourself, you'll find out that two women CAN love each other, and show it, the same way that a man and woman can love each other and show it. I think that you're nervous when you don't have to be: what I hope we'll do together is make LOVE. I think that I'm nervous, because I so VERY much want this to be a happy-making thing for you. I think you're afraid that you're going to do something wrong, or maybe find out that you don't like making love with another woman. I think that's okay - because if you make a mistake, I'm the one to make it with because I'm not going to be upset with you. I think that if you decide you don't like this, then that's okay - at least you TRIED, and you'll be deciding on something you KNOW about, instead of just what you've heard. I think you've been unhappy for a long time, and I think I would like to be the person who helps you find out just how happy you CAN be."

By the time she was finished, Lucy could see that she had gotten through - Sarah didn't look anywhere near as nervous as she had before; if anything, she looked confident about what she expected to happen that afternoon.

Looking into Sarah's eyes, Lucy asked "Would you like to go to your room, now, or would you like to stay down here for a while?"

Confidently, Sarah answered "I'm ready to go upstairs, now - with YOU."

Smiling, Lucy leaned in to give Sarah another kiss - and while their lips were together, gently cupped Sarah's breast in her hand - and a moment later, felt Sarah return the gesture.

When their lips parted, Lucy could see the love - and trust - in Sarah's eyes. Sarah took her by the hand, and let the way to her bedroom. Inside, Sarah didn't bother closing the door behind them, saying "I know that there's no one going to bother us - Dan wouldn't, and he wouldn't let anyone else, either."

Lucy smiled, and said "You're absolutely right."

Sarah smiled back, and moved to stand in front of Lucy; this time, it was Sarah that initiated the kiss - and was the first to touch the other woman's breast. Lucy responded in kind - happily, when Sarah's lips parted so the two of them could start dueling with their tongues. It was a short time before both women were softly panting as each felt the other's nipples hardening under their fingers, and felt her own nipples erect in response.

After their kiss broke, Lucy took a step back and began taking her clothes off after telling Sarah "I want to do this, for you. I want you to see me as I am, and know that I'm sharing myself with you because I want to."

Sarah was content to stand and watch as Lucy slowly removed her clothing - first her blouse, then her bra. Standing topless before Sarah, Lucy went on to take off her skirt, then her panties, and finally her stockings. When she was done, she calmly and casually stood naked before our friend; leaving herself open to - if not actually inviting - Sarah's inspection, from head to toe.

And Sarah did that very thing - openly looking at Lucy, seeing the firm, round breasts capped with dark pink areolas and obviously erect nipples. Further down, she could see Lucy's trim waist and flat belly; below that, the small vee of Lucy's dark blonde pubic thatch set at the junction of a pair of trim, slender legs.

For her part, Lucy could feel herself getting more excited as Sarah looked at her - knowing that the woman standing opposite her could see her erect nipples, and the cleft of her sex - if not her aching erect clitoris and surely-dripping labia!

When she was done examining Lucy, Sarah followed her example: slowly extricating herself from the clothing that had felt so nice when she put it on, and now felt as though it were smothering her. In short order, she'd discarded her blouse and bra, feeling her own nipples hardening even more in the soft breeze - and from the knowledge that Lucy could see them getting harder, the truth be told.

Next to go was Sarah's skirt, quickly followed by her panties - she'd shaved her legs in the shower, and didn't feel the need to put stockings on. Standing in front of Lucy, Sarah stood - if not so calmly, at least as patiently - as Lucy did, for the same reasons.

Lucy saw the same sight I had: a pair of medium-sized breasts with half-dollar size areolas, and small, pink nipples at their peaks. Sarah's body was a trifle heavier than her own, but still trim and fit; at the apex of her firm thighs, the small dark wedge of Sarah's pubic mound. And unless she was mistaken, she could see that Sarah's arousal was as strong as her own.

Lucy was the first to move - stepping close to Sarah, and leaning forward to place a soft, gentle kiss on each of Sarah's nipples before standing up again and saying "You have such beautiful breasts, and your nipples just begged me to do that!"

Sarah responded by doing much the same to Lucy - only adding to it by briefly sucking on each of Lucy's nipples. When she was facing Lucy again, Sarah told her "And I think yours are beautiful, too. I... I just couldn't resist doing that."

Lucy smiled, and told her "I'm glad you did - it felt very nice."



Lucy stepped forward again, and took Sarah into her arms, hugging her and getting hugged in return - delighting in the way her breasts and nipples rubbed against Sarah's body, and how Sarah's felt against her. After a few moments of enjoying how their bodies felt against each other, Lucy carefully eased the two of them toward the bed, then guided them down onto it. When both were seated, they released each other, and sat there for a few seconds just looking at each other.

It was Sarah that moved next, looking deep into Lucy's eyes as she raised her hands to place them over Lucy's breasts - quietly thrilled to be touching another woman that way.

Lucy responded by simply sitting there, telling Sarah "I like it when you touch me like that. Just so you know, you're welcome to touch me any how and any where you want to. I know you've never touched another woman like this, and I want you to get, and be, comfortable doing it."

Sarah nodded her understanding, not trusting herself to speak, she was so excited at the possibilities Lucy had just opened up to her.

As Lucy sat there, she loved the feel of Sarah's hands on her breasts; when Sarah began softly squeezing her breasts, and gently pulling on her erect nipples - making them even harder and longer. Lucy couldn't help pressing her chest forward, increasing the contact between her tight breasts and Sarah's hands.

Sarah realized that Lucy was pressing her breasts into her hands, and knowing that Lucy was doing it because she LIKED what was happening, felt herself become even more aroused and excited. With the encouragement Lucy was giving her, Sarah finally felt ready to begin exploring Lucy's body even more.

Lucy sat there, barely able to control herself when she felt Sarah's hand leave her breast and begin tracing its way down her body - first across her waist, then on to her hips, and finally felt a grazing touch on her pubic mound. Without hesitation, she opened her legs, inviting Sarah's soft hand to continue its journey. After only a moment's hesitation, it did - and Lucy felt Sarah's first, tentative touches on her mons.

Sarah could hardly believe that she'd had the nerve to touch Lucy in such an intimate and personal area - and was nearly overwhelmed when she felt Lucy spread her thighs to make room for her hand. It took her a second to summon the courage to continue, but Sarah finally got her hand moving again. She found herself surprised at the feel of Lucy's pubic hair; and even more so at how differently Lucy's pubic mound felt from her own. Without even realizing she was doing it, Sarah moved her hand even lower, seeking to find out how else Lucy's body differed from her own.

When Lucy felt Sarah's gentle touch between her thighs - then on her vaginal lips - she thought she was going to climax right on the spot, it felt so good. But she managed to control herself, afraid that if she said or did anything too 'extreme', she'd frighten Sarah

away and ruin everything for her. All she did was arch her back a little, tilting herself forward so that Sarah could touch as much of her as she desired.

Sarah felt Lucy move, and was briefly afraid that she'd gone too far - until she realized that Lucy was opening herself up to her touch even more. With that, it finally sank in to the deepest part of Sarah's mind that not only was Lucy ACCEPTING her touch, but actually encouraging it; that was all Sarah needed to understand that another woman was actually finding her desirable. It was only a few moments before Sarah freed her hand to truly explore Lucy's anatomy, happily discovering for herself how they were the same and how they were different - and rejoicing in the learning.

Lucy continued to hold herself still, even though Sarah's touch on her body - and between her legs! - was arousing her tremendously. She loved Sarah, and wanted to be able to share with her the pleasure that only two women could know with each other. Lucy loved me so much that at times she wondered why it didn't kill her, and I made her happier than she'd known was possible - but there simply wasn't any way I could ever make her feel the same way another woman did when they made love with each other. She knew that I knew I didn't understand, and that I accepted that fact - and loved me even more because I not only didn't mind, but encouraged her to find and enjoy the pleasure she got with another woman.

As Sarah's hand continued to explore Lucy's sex - she was pleased and excited when she discovered that Lucy was as wet inside as SHE felt - Sarah lowered her head and began sucking on Lucy's nipples again: delighted at how they felt and tasted in her mouth, how they seemed to get even harder and longer as she sucked on them, and pleased when she heard Lucy's soft moans of arousal.

They stayed like that for several minutes, Lucy's arousal increasing almost by the second as Sarah's hands softly and deftly reconnoitered the area between her thighs. She felt Sarah's fingers slip between her labia as the woman next to her gently and carefully familiarized herself with her body. Finally, Sarah let Lucy's nipple pull free from her lips and with only a trace of hesitation asked "I've never seen another woman, there - between her legs. I hardly know what I look like, there. Would you mind laying down, and letting me see?"

Lucy could only smile and answer "Of course not, Sarah. Please, look and touch all you want, for as long as you want."

Lucy willingly - happily - moved to lie on her back on the bed, spreading her legs and drawing her knees up so that she open herself to Sarah's inspection.

For her part, despite all that had happened that afternoon, Sarah was still amazed that Lucy would so willingly, even eagerly, open herself to another woman - to be looked at, there, in her most intimate place! Still, that didn't stop her from moving onto the bed with Lucy, and positioning herself so that she had easy viewing and access to the area that interested her so much.

Sarah's first look at Lucy's aroused vaginal opening and labia nearly left her speechless. Only after she'd gotten her wits back did she look up at Lucy and say "What Dan told me was right: it DOES look like a flower blooming!"

Lucy couldn't help but reply "Yes, its a flower - and its blooming for YOU."

Sarah felt herself give a little shiver at what Lucy had just said - her meaning being entirely too clear! Still, she wasn't going to pass up this chance to really see what a woman looked like, any more than she'd wanted to pass up looking at me. Lowering her head, she quickly got a noseful of the scent of Lucy's arousal - and was surprised to discover that it was making her mouth water slightly. She smelled so GOOD!

Still, Sarah wanted to look - and that she did. Lowering her head a little more, she found herself mesmerized by the sight of Lucy's womanhood. There, at the top of the cleft was what could only be her clitoris - the same little nubbin that SHE found stimulated her so much. Reaching out, Sarah carefully pulled back the little hood over it, and looked at it - fascinated that such a small bit of flesh could make a woman feel so good. Next, she extended her hand a little farther, fascinated by how sparse, yet full, Lucy's pubic hair was. From there, it was down to where she could see Lucy's labia - glistening with what could only be the same wetness that she, herself, produced. She carefully examined them, then reached to touch them, marveling at how delicate they looked. As she continued manipulating Lucy's vaginal lips, Sarah couldn't help but notice that they got a bit longer, and darker, as she moved them around. And when she looked between them, she could easily see that Lucy was very wet inside - so much so that there was a small trickle of her moisture slowly making its way out. Sarah had always felt mildly embarrassed at how wet she sometimes got inside; seeing how amply Lucy produced the same kinds of fluids, she realized that she wasn't as peculiar as she'd once thought she was. Besides, it was SO sexy, now that she had a chance to really look at it!

Remembering how SHE had tasted when she kissed me after I used my mouth on her, Sarah couldn't resist finding out if Lucy tasted anything like that. She reached forward and gently ran a fingertip between Lucy's parted labia, collecting a goodly sample of her juice. She briefly ran it between a couple of fingers, amazed at how slippery it felt, before sliding the finger with the greater amount on her finger in her mouth. It took a second before she got the full taste of it; it was only a moment later that she decided that she liked the way another woman - or Lucy, at least - tasted!

Almost without realizing she was doing it, Sarah lowered her head to let her tongue collect the next sample - and was surprised when Lucy moaned softly, and lifted her hips slightly in response. Shucks, here she was giving pleasure to another woman, and she wasn't even trying to yet - this wasn't anything at ALL like she'd thought it was going to be! Not only was it pretty easy so far, but it was fun!

Lucy tried to stay calm and still while Sarah was busy investigating the area between her thighs; but what the other woman was doing - without even realizing it, apparently - was

only turning her on more and more. When Sarah finally licked her, Lucy couldn't help but respond. It didn't seem to bother Sarah any - if anything, it only seemed to encourage her, because a few moments later, she did it again; then again, and again...

Sarah was quite happy licking the ample fluids that Lucy was producing; when she heard Lucy say "That feels SO good. Will you let me do it to you, too, now?"

It took Sarah only the briefest moment to decide that that sounded like a fine idea, and started moving her body around. When she was close, she felt Lucy touching her leg, and understood that Lucy wanted to help guide her into position. She willingly cooperated, and it was only a moment later when she felt Lucy's tongue start moving between her own vaginal lips - and just as it had when I'd done it, Lucy's actions made her feel wonderful. She could only hold herself there for a few seconds, enjoying Lucy's attentions, before she realized that there was a difference between the way I had used my mouth on her, and the way Lucy was doing it. Both felt great, but somehow, Lucy's way of doing it felt... right, somehow. Not that I'd done anything wrong; it was just that Lucy's way of doing it was more in tune with how she, Sarah, felt as a woman.

Beneath Sarah, Lucy was overjoyed to finally be able to begin showing Sarah how good it could feel to make love with another woman. Sarah had been doing just fine getting Lucy going, and Lucy was determined to return the favor!

Over the course of the next half hour, the two of them took considerable delight in being able to please each other; Sarah happily took her cue of what to do to Lucy from what Lucy was doing to her - going from just using her tongue on Lucy's vaginal lips and entrance to including the use of her mouth and lips, and including Lucy's clitoris. It wasn't long before Sarah felt herself getting close to an orgasm, thanks to Lucy's dancing, probing, EVER so talented tongue. She tried to hold off so that she could return the favor, but Lucy was simply too good and too enthusiastic - a little longer, and Sarah felt herself trip over into one of the strongest orgasms she'd ever experienced. It was further intensified by Lucy's knowledgeable and skillful mouth and lips: with every spasm that wracked her body, Lucy was softly sucking on her clitoris.

Finally, Sarah couldn't stand it any more and reluctantly pulled herself off of Lucy, nearly collapsing next to her as she tried to get her breath and senses back. A few moments later, she felt Lucy move, then settle next to her - followed by Lucy's arms wrapping around her. For the next couple of minutes, they lay like that, Sarah enfolded in Lucy's arms as Lucy provided comfort and emotional support after Sarah's first woman-on-woman orgasm.

When she was fully recovered, Sarah turned in Lucy's arms and gave her a kiss - not only not minding, but welcoming the fact that she would get a taste of her own essence. When their tongues had finished playing with each other, Sarah pulled her head back slightly, and in an amazed voice told Lucy "I was so scared, at first - but then I got started, and it turned out to be so wonderful!"

Lucy smiled, and said "I noticed."

Sarah didn't even blush - she just moved in to collect another kiss before asking "Is it like that every time?"

"That depends. If you love each other, and want to make each other feel good and happy, then yes, it can be."

Sarah looked at her for a second, then said "And if you don't love each other, then there really isn't any point to it, is there?"

Lucy caressed Sarah's face before answering "No, not really."

Sarah looked distracted for a few moments, then said "I understand, now, why you and Dan didn't want to have Lisa in your bed just because she wanted to show you how grateful she was for all you've done, and to thank you. You might have felt good, physically, but it really wouldn't have meant anything to you, would it - not like what we just did?"

Lucy smiled and answered "No, it wouldn't."

Sarah thought that over for a few seconds, then told her "Then I'm glad you told her no. It wouldn't have been right for her to have been in your bed without doing it because she loved you, and you loved her."

"That's what we thought, too."

"Now I really understand how much it can change a body, what Dan told me about being honest with yourself, and all the rest of it. If I hadn't come around to your way of thinking, I don't think - no, I KNOW I wouldn't - have appreciated this as much as I do, now."

After a bit, Sarah was eager and willing to let Lucy start discovering HER body; the two of them spent the rest of the afternoon giving and receiving pleasure - and love.

When we were cleared to continue our vacation, Lucy and I had a delightful going-away 'party' with Sarah - involving just the three of us.

We got home a few weeks later than we'd planned on - but that only served to make it all the more sweet for us. Robyn and Sandra showed us how much they'd missed us with a three-day debauch during which they pampered Lucy and me mercilessly.

Several months later, we got a letter from Sarah. She told us that Sheriff Babcock had been courting her - his wife having died years before from an illness contracted during childhood. He'd finally gotten around to asking her to marry him; she'd decided that he was the kind of man she wanted in her life, and had decided to accept. Lucy and I called to congratulate them, and learned that Lisa and Charlie had already gotten married, and that the Marines had decided to send Charlie to college and make him an officer. He and Lisa were happy as they could be together, and were expecting their first child - a boy, according to ultrasound; and to be named Daniel, interestingly enough.